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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

Thesis

THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS FOUND IN THE PARABLES

Submitted by

Anna Lyle

(A.B., Albert Lea College, 1910)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for

the degree of Master of Arts

1928

Jesus Christ-Teaching
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THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS FOUND IN THE PARABLES

For the Kingdom of God

"Help us, O Lord, in the courage of faith to seize what has now come so near, that the glad day of God may dawn at last. As we have mastered Nature that we might gain wealth, help us now to master the social relations of mankind that we may gain Justice and a world of brothers. For what shall it profit our nation if it gain numbers and riches, and lose the sense of the living God and the joy of human brotherhood?"

Rauschenbusch, W. in Prayers of the Social Awakening.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS FOUND IN THE PARABLES

INTRODUCTION

THE PROBLEM

"The social movement is the most important ethical and spiritual movement in the modern world, ..."[1] In this critical stage of history, when we are facing a closely inter-related world, in which materialism and selfishness seem to hold sway in men's lives, socity is being forced to seek some practical solution for the problem. The complex, world-wide social order which has arisen must somehow, we are told, be brought into conformity with a few great, fundamental principles which will enable every man to reach the freest and fullest development of his personality, while he is cooperating with others in the establishment of a lasting social order wherein all will desire the good of each, and each the good of all.[2]

In the discussion of this problem we are led by many[3] to conclude that the social teachings of the Hebrew prophets and of Jesus are the most valuable contributions of the past, and that they are the basis for the most lasting principles. It is the purpose of this paper to examine the parables of Jesus, for whom the Kingdom of God as a realizable social fact was of paramount importance in order to determine what he intended his general hearers to understand; the nature of the life that would fit them for his coming Kingdom, and the character of the life that ought forever to prevail on earth.

1- Rauschenbusch, Walter: A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 4

2- Coe, George A.: Social Theory of Religious Education. Part I. Chap. IV

3- Kent, C.F.: Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus. Chap. I
Wendt, H. H.: Teachings of Jesus. Chap. I
Sanders, F. K.: Old Testament Prophecy, Chap. I
Mathews, Shailer: Social Teachings of Jesus - Introduction

THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS AS FOUND IN THE PARABLES

INTRODUCTION

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METHOD OF PROCEDURE

We shall examine first his inheritance of social ideals from the Hebrew prophets of the past, then we shall note the prevailing social system of Judaism of his day; we shall examine the bearing, if any, that the Apocalyptic literature of his day may have had upon his own thought. With all this before us, we shall examine his parabolic utterances to the crowds who followed him, and from them, seek to determine the nature of the social ideal implied, and its bearing upon our own social structure.

II. HISTORICAL FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS

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"Righteousness exalteth a nation

But sin is a reproach to any people."

Proverbs 14:34.

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JESUS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCRIPTURES

Jesus does not stand apart, isolated from the past history of his nation; he built upon what had gone before. The more study one gives to the question of the self-consciousness of Jesus, the more one is impressed with the normal development of his personality; so that it is necessary in order to appreciate fully the teachings of Christ, to know his background of Jewish thought and development.

Jesus had behind him a line of grest social teachers, and the Scriptures are saturated with social idealism. He did not receive his education at the hand of the Pharisees, for they considered him a self-taught man. Surprised at his understanding of the Law, they said, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"[1] He was educated in the Scriptures to the extent that every ordinary Jewish boy was. Yet, judging by his manhood, it would not be reading too much into his boyhood to say that he was naturally interested in religious matters, and that to him such study was not a mere fulfillment of a certain necessary requirement of the law, but a living, interesting task; that he pondered what he read, interpreting all in the light of his growing understanding of God as his Father. With such an approach, to the Scriptures, it is not to be wondered at that he found in them something different and higher than the ordinary Jewish reader found who approached them from the legal point of view. So vital, so interesting were the Old Testament writings to him in the light of his own self-consciousness that he interpreted them to others in a way which brought a feeling to his hearers that here was one who saw religious

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[1]- John 7:15

things in the light of truth and not merely in the haze of orthodox perfection of letter observation. This is proven by the fact that when he came into the city of Nazareth where he was well known, he was invited by the synagogue authorities to read and interpret the Scriptures to the audience.[1] Not every young man was invited to stand before a synagogue congregation and interpret the Law and Prophets. His attainments along that line would be known before the rulers would have allowed him to speak, "and all bare him witness, and wondered at the words of grace which proceeded out of his mouth." So the fact is indubitable that he did read deeply the writings of the prophets and law-givers of the past, and learn of them. Now, what were the social ideals he thus imbibed?

SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE LAW

Moses' Attitude Toward Social Oppression

Israel, of all nations, is a leading social teacher. To a large degree this is due to the fact that her history opened with a tremendous social struggle; in the throes of a great industrial crisis, the Hebrew nation was born. Moses possessed a social consciousness, aroused to national loyalty by the sight of oppression against his countryman.[2] He is the first man in Hebrew history who clearly realized that back of this world is a God of justice and mercy; one who sympathizes with the socially oppressed. Naturally certain economic and social principles stood out during that struggle, which not only affected the Israelites of that day, but which colored their subsequent philosophy of society.[2] It has been said, "The prophets put to interest the pound which Moses gave them."[3] The earliest

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1- Matthew 13:54; Mark 6:1,2; Luke 4:16-22

2- Kent, C.F.: Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus. Chap. I

3- Quoted in Course S.T.I-2, Old Testament History and Literature, Feb.16,1928

account in the Old Testament, designated as the "J" document, shows that Moses felt Jehovah dealt with him in a personal way, and that through him, a more intimate relationship with God was established; a fact which gave him an insight into divine character as deeply spiritual as the conception of Amos or Hosea.

Social Legislation

"Love thy Neighbor"

A study of Mosaic laws gives evidence of the Hebrew social attitude as it worked out through legislation. Treatment of others; whether fellow citizens or aliens, friends or foes, rested on the following statement, and others similar;[1] "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; I am the Lord".[2] This was a basic law, but for actual conduct in particular matters they as every people had to make other laws which explicit ly defined cases and determined punishments.

Business Transactions

It was unlawful to charge interest; since the one borrowing was in need and the payment of more than the amount borrowed would work a decided hardship, laws in regard to business transactions were of such nature that there was little opportunity for speculation.[3]

Regard for the feelings of others.

A sensitive regard for the feelings of others was urged also. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart. Thou shalt not fail to reprove thy fellow and not bear sin because of him. Thou shalt not take revenge, nor nurse a grudge against the members of thy people; but shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[4] Amos

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1- Moore, G.F.: Judaism. Vol. 2 Part V. Chap. V.
2- Leviticus 19:18
3- Moore, G.F.: Judaism. Vol. 2. Part V. Chap. V.
4- Leviticus 19:18

also expressed much the same thought.[1] Jesus gave detailed instructions in regard to winning an estranged brother, with a deeper interpretation of this same idea of magnanimous regard for another's attitude.[2]

SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHETS

The Prophets as Social Reformers

The prophets however, were the real molders of Hebrew religion, for under their direction, thought gradually shaped itself into so satisfactory an interpretation of God, man, and the universe that scholars almost universally recognize it as the most constructive religious plan ever developed before Christ. The best of the prophets were social reformers and statesmen as truly as they were proclaimers of God.[3] In their philosophy, life did not exist in separate units; with their daily life partitioned off from their religious life. It was their earnest emphasis upon every-day religion and morality which makes their writings helpful to our age. These prophets were not vague dreamers, but men of keen insight. Their interpretations of great social problems are so significant that modern thinkers cannot afford to ignore them. The more one studies them, the more one is impressed with their abiding value. Throughout their teachings one finds a decided unity between two dominant aims; a way by which man may enter into a close acquaintance with God, and a life of right relations with his fellowmen so that all may attain supreme happiness and complete self-expression.[4]

As time went on, Israel became more prosperous, cities arose, a wealthy noble class almost reduced the middle class to the condition of

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1- Amos 5:14,15
2- Moore, G.F.: Op. Cit.
3- Sanders, F.K.: Old Testament Prophecy - Introduction
4- Kent, C.F.: Op. Cit. Chap. II

servants by their heavy taxes. The social problems with which the prophets wrestled seem very similar to those of our modern cities. To the wealthy classes, religion became either a matter of duty, or a salve to the conscience, and yet there remained behind it all, the religious and social conceptions of Moses to which the prophet could appeal.[1]

PROPHETS OF THE EIGHTH CENTURY

Amos. Upon these scenes of injustice, came a rugged shepherd from the fields of Tekoa,[2] who with the alert keeness of an unspoiled countryman, saw the underlying weakness and irreverence of city life. Naturally the pampered, useless women were not flattered when this young rustic called them "kine of Bashan",[3] nor did the prosperous lords thank him for pulling the mask from their injustice. The two leading ideas of his social teachings were democracy and brotherhood; cruelty to friend or foe was considered sin; justice, brotherly love and kindness were cardinal virtues.[4] Only fidelity to the demands of justice and human brotherhood would save men and nations from unbridled greed and selfishness with attendant ruin.

Hosea. About the same time, a more cultured man appeared and spoke from the deep affection of his heart. "He was Israel's great moral and social diagnostician because as a result of his own painful experience he learned to look upon life and human society through the eyes of love."[5] His greatest contribution to society was his interpretation of God as a Father who constantly loves his disloyal people.[6] He approached the high level of Jesus' teaching that God is

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1- Sanders, F.K.: Op. Cit. Chap. I
2- Amos 1:1
3- Amos 4:1
4- Amos Chaps. 4,5,8.
5- Kent C.F.: Op. Cit. p. 50
6- Hosea, Chaps. 11, 14

love and that personal loyalty to him is essential for a perfect social order,[1] since love to realize itself fully, must be returned.[2] If a perfect social order is to be established, men must first realize God as love who is ever seeking to develop a perfect humanity. When a man can obtain that conception of God, then he will love both Him and his fellow man and so be faithful to his social responsibilities.

Isaiah Foreign customs and ideas continued to grow upon Judah; legal injustice, misuse of authority, exploitation of the poor, and debauchery were the common elements of Hebrew society when Isaiah came with his condemnation. He was in close contact with the religious rulers. He challenged the elders and princes and declared that graft was written over Judah's public life.[3] To him the characteristic quality of God was holiness, one who therefore desired his people to be righteous. To Isaiah the solution of problems seemed simple because he approached them from the religious point of view, with the idea that the highest social efficiency was possible only as a right relationship was established with the divine personality which gave unity to all life. Above all, he traced the kingdom of God which was to become the central factor in the evolution of the human race.[4]

Micah. Micah also declared that religion did not consist in forms nor in creeds but in acts of justice and love. His desire was to see his people have a trusting attitude toward God which would make daily fellowship with him possible.[5] Micah's chief concern was the city aristocracy who exploited the poor,[6] and he scathingly denounced

1- Kent, C.F.:Op. Cit. Chap. V
2- Hosea 6:4-6
3- Isaiah: 3:14-15b
4- Kent, C.F.: Op. cit. Chap. VI
5- Micah 6:8
6- Soares, T.G.: The Social Institutions of the Bible, p. 202

the evil thing that was destroying his people. To him, is ascribed the statement which gives a complete expression of God's demands upon men:

> "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;
> And what doth Jehovah require of thee,
> But to do justly,
> And to love kindness
> And to walk humbly with God."[1]

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah were not concerned with the denunciation of certain outstanding acts of tyranny; they were the opponents of the whole social system as they perceived its degeneration. They felt they were the champions for a God who is the defender of the poor and oppressed. They were moved by a "profound religious experience of the intimate interest of God in the affairs of men, an ethical conviction that immediate and fundamental reformation of national life was necessary, a sympathy with the great population which was oppressed and unable to secure its rights...."[2]

Contributions of the Seventh Century

Jeremiah. Jeremiah, a young man of priestly order, was called to become the champion of Jehovah's cause through the nature of his own ardent and sensitive soul. He conceived God to be good and just; one who arranged affairs with regard only to righteousness. His purpose was to free his people from the taint of heathenism and turn their loyalty to Jehovah that he might avert the threatening doom of subjugation, and finally restore their national spirit. Due to the fact that he unflinchingly told Israel what the inevitable result of her sin and indifference would be, he was branded as a traitor and imprisoned. Nevertheless through all his discouragement and failure, Jeremiah firmly believed

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2- Soares, T.G.: The Social Institutions of the Bible. p. 202

in the final destiny of Israel. He never gave up hope for a national penitence.[1] He hoped in a future social state, and saw that this would result only as individuals were regenerated "for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them."[2]

> "So much of what we call social service and social endeavor is an effort to make other people good. Jeremiah sees men with humble hearts seeking each to do the will of God as he finds it in his own conscience, and thus united together seeking to organize a society in which justice and truth shall prevail."[3]

Deuteronomic Laws

About this time the Deuteronomic Laws came into the foreground, and from then on became the chief code of Judaism. They clearly emphasized the responsibility of employers to laborers,[4] and one of their chief endeavors was to prevent poverty by removing the cause. They insisted on justice in public courts, for both rich and poor,[5] and condemned all exploitation of laboring classes. They forbade rulers to amass private fortunes and in order to right inequalities, every seventh year was designated as a year of release.[6] They maintained that to follow honesty, industry and moral virtues would banish poverty.[7] In their care of the poor, the emphasis was on constructive charity rather than remedial.[8] The Decalogue[9] and public liturgy[10] warned every Israelite against the unsocial crimes of murder, adultery, theft, and false witness. The truly social citizen was not only generous but considerate of others' feelings.[11]

1- Jeremiah 29:11-13
2- Ibid 31:31-34
3- Soares, T.G. op. cit. p.261
4- Deuteronomy 24:14,15; 22:8
5- Ibid 16:18-20
6- Ibid 15:1-3
7- Ibid 15:4,5
8- Ibid 24:17-22
9- Ibid 5:14-21
10- Ibid 27:17-24
11- Ibid 27:10,11,17-18

The Deuteronomic Law went even further than the former statement, "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself,"[1] meaning fellow Israelities, and included foreigners.[2] However, their conception of God was the ideal that enabled them to carry out these laws.[3] This code expressed ideals for human conduct which even today await complete acceptance and yet they are far removed from Jesus! "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you."[4]

The Social Outlook for the Sixth Century

The Exile brought a changed outlook. Out of the disastrous experiences of that period, the individual emerged and a personal religion developed. The prophet of that day perceived that the national mind could be touched only through the individual one. "The faithful Jews who endured injustice at the hands of their heathen neighbors and rulers, and taunts and insults from the mercenary apostate leaders of the Judean community, by their endurance and fidelity kept alive the religious life of Judaism and thereby performed an inestimable service for Jehovah and for humanity."[5]

Ezekiel. Ezekiel, who was of the priesthood,[6] conceived of Jehovah's activity as a motive for demonstrating his supremity, an outlook which removed God from direct contact with man and thought of him as revealing himself by means of cherubim and angels.[7] This led to the idea that to have communion with God, man must first of all consider his holiness, and this brought into being an extended code of laws in regard to ritualistic observances. It put moral, ceremonial, and ecclesiastical

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1- Leviticus 19:18
2- Deuteronomy 10:19,24:17b
3- Ibid 10:12
4- Luke 6:27
5- Kent, C.F.: op cit. p. 137
6- Ezekiel 1:3
7- Ibid 1:5,9:2

laws all on the same basis.[1] This trend in prophetic interpretation was important because it gave the basis for the Judaism of Jesus' time.

Deutero-Isaiah. The teachings found in the latter part of Isaiah[2] broadened Israel's social consciousness and brought religious thinking far along the road towards the Christian conception of the world as a human family, held together by loyalty to a common Father. This man of God disagreed entirely with the pretentious type of religion which insisted on ceremonies and fastings to win God's favor, when at the same time these worshipers were probably ignoring the claims of their fellow men.[3] The true servant of God is an upbuilder whose reward is the joy which comes from complete self-realization and consciousness of doing God's will.[4] By their exile, the Israelites were led to dream of a social order which would take in all nations of the earth. It was the working out of this ideal of a servant who personified the very spirit of Israel, through whom, not only all Israel, but the whole world should be redeemed, which gives us the great picture which we always think of as the portrait of Christ.[5]

Social Outlook of the Fifth Century

With Haggai and Zechariah there started a different phase of prophecy, which in time superceded the truer type entirely. The first expression of this was in the sixth century before Christ when Zephaniah declared God would call the nations to judgment[6] and give the righteous remnant of Israel an opportunity. Israel, in her national helplessness, saw no other way for God to fulfill his promises than by material means.

1- Peters, J.P.: op. cit. Chap. XVIII
2- Isaiah, Chaps. 44-66
3- Isaiah 58:1-11
4- Kent, C.F.: op. cit. Chap. VII
5- Isaiah, Chap. 53
6- Zephaniah 3:8

It would seem that Haggai and Zechariah were confident that God would open up the way for Zerubbabel to be the fulfiller of the Messianic hopes; Israel's glory rather than her task.[1] A trend of thinking had started away from the fine idealism of Isaiah which was never set straight until Jesus came with the truer interpretation.

Social Teachings of the Fourth Century

The morale of Israel seems to have grown lower and lower. Probably the book of Malachi belongs to about 450 B.C. and in it we see the state of affairs; the priesthood dishonered God,[2] and the people profaned their covenant with Jehovah by divorcing their Hebrew wives in order to marry foreign women.[3] Their only hope lay in the coming of a second Elijah who would right all social discord.[4]

All through the later prophetic books, one senses a growing spirit of legalism, which these prophets deplore. Their work made ready the soil for the reforms of Nehemiah and Ezra who rebuilt the nation upon the solemn adoption of the Law,[5] and so the legalistic party secured control.[6]

The remaining prophetic passages of the Old Testament are increasingly apocalyptic in tone.[7] They show a stormy time in Hebrew history, when the Jewish ideal had become the righteous man who strictly followed the precepts of Judaism. Synagogues arose in order to teach the Law, and high moral code grew up among Jews concerning their treatment of one another. They supposed God would deal with Israel as sons and

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1- Sanders, F.K.: op. cit. Chap. IX
2- Malachi 1:6-2:9
3- Ibid 2:1-16
4- Ibid 4:4-6
5- Nehemiah, Chap. 8
6- Peters, J.P.: op. cit. Chap. XIX
7- Joel, Jonah, Daniel k,3-6,
Zechariah 9-14

with all other nations as strangers. Observance of law became the end in itself, but it had value in that it created a religious belief concerning everyday conduct; the special deed of righteousness which would atone for sins grew to be almsgiving and righteousness.[1]

The Inter-Testament Period

Legalism. Legalism now held sway in Hebrew religion; its chief exponents were the Pharisees, who constituted the real spirit of Judaism. Religion was not only most discouraging, but also deadening.[2] To the Jews of this period, God had two outstanding moral characteristics; justice and mercy. Although their interpretation of God had become primarily an idea of immanence, they still considered themselves peculiarly God's children. The middle classes alone hoped for a moral and social awakening, which would remove the narrow religious and social forms.

Rabbis. However, it is not a fair picture to make this inter-testament period appear to have been devoid of any high moral value, as we are likely to believe because there is a blank between the literature in the canon of the Old and New Testaments. Truly, there is no voice of a prophet, and it is rather surprising to find that the moving voice in the ethical and social awakening which came near the close of the first century before Christ, was that of a rabbi, Hillel. He was famed for his meekness, tolerance, breadth and democracy and was said to love all men.[3] A saying reported to be his is, "Judge not another until you have come into his place."[4] Perhaps his supreme utterance was, "Do not to your neighbor what is unpleasant to yourself; this is the whole

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1- Peters, J.P. op. cit. Chap. XIX

2- Gibson, G.M.: History of New Testament Times, Chap. IV

3- Kent, C.F.:op. cit. Chap. XV

4- Kent, C.F.: op. cit. quoted on p. 169

law; all else is but exposition."[1]

Among those who have tried to show us what contribution this period of Judaism made, George Foot Moore has pointed out some exceedingly worthwhile ones which we shall summarize.[2] Even worse than distorting true values, these religious sects produced a self-complacency, the result of their belief that they were especially pleasing to God. It meant a spirit of presumptuous censoriousness toward outsiders as though Hebrews alone had a right to speak for God. The relief of the poor was organized. Every Friday enough was provided to last during the coming week, and a transient in the town who was without money received aid also. Upon the community rested the responsibility for the orphans who were to be launched into life successfully when the time came. However, there was a more constructive side also. Men were to make every possible effort not to become public charges and every father was to teach his son a trade. Every one was enjoined to earn his own living even though his employment might be repugnant.

Vindictiveness and anger were abominable. "Will a man cherish anger against a man and seek healing from the Lord! On a man like himself he has no mercy and he begs pardon for his own sins!"[3] "Four classes of men will not be received in the divine presence: scoffers, liars, hypocrites and retailers of slanders."[4] In court affairs, every precaution was taken in order to get the truth and a false witness in a criminal case was liable to execution. The School of Shammai condemned social "white lies" and even flattery was considered hypocrisy. Love to God was the motive of obedience in all social relationships. During this age,

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1- Kent, C.F.: op. cit. quoted on p. 169
2- Moore, G.F.: op cit. Vol. 2, Part V. Chap. VII
3- Ecclesiasticus 27:29
4- Moore, G.F. op. cit. Vol. 2. p. 149

God was addressed in prayer as "Father" much more often than in former times. In rabbinical literature, this father-son relationship between God and man was common, although it was new.

THE PREVAILING IDEAS CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AT THE TIME OF CHRIST

Apocalyptic

Perhaps the most outstanding characteristic of this time was the continued devotion of a select righteous few to exact observance of the requirements of the law. This condition resulted in an unsocial attitude of contempt for the masses whose daily duties and business made it impossible to fulfill constant ceremonial observances. It was among this common people that the Messianic hope held sway; it was their great comfort to look for a day when Jehovah would miraculously institute a kingdom of righteousness, to which their entrance would be automatically assured because they were the chosen people.[1]

Montefiore points out from a Jewish standpoint how hopeless their lives had become.[2] Their history for years had been one long revolt, during which time they were despised, and ill-treated. Intrigue, oppression, and corruption often prevailed and because of the heathen customs of their rulers the people were in a constant state of unrest, excitement, and wretchedness. Under such conditions the Messianic hope survived, but they could see no possible way for its fulfillment except by means of a universal catastrophe. The universality of the Hebrew religion is the origin and meaning of the "Kingdom of Heaven".[3] The religious significance for us lies in the fact that it helped continue the faith that the history of the world is a plan of God which he will carry out to the end.

1- Soares, T.G.: op. cit. XXIX
2- Montefiore, C.G.: Synoptic Gospels - Introduction
3- Moore, G.F.: op. cit. Vol. 1, Part II, Chap. V

A National Idea of Kingdom of Heaven

A political expectation of the Kingdom of God was an inheritance from the prophets; a hope that Israel would recover her power and enter on an era of peace and prosperity. It was natural that the idea of deliverance was associated with a political upheaval; the Jews never separated secular phases of their life from their religion, therefore a political and economic kingdom did not seem inappropriate.

Spiritual Interpretation of the Kingdom

A soundly healthy social attitude was held by the more spiritually minded; a note that might have been found in any of the groups into which the nation was divided but belonged to no particular division. It was in the minds of the godly priest Zacharias and in his wife, Elisabeth, and their son. It was in the life of Joseph of Nazareth and Mary;[1] there were many who shared the opinions of the great prophets who taught that God's kingdom was not a matter of creeds and ceremonies, but of character and love.

JESUS' ATTITUDE TO THE KINGDOM AS A SOCIAL SOLUTION

At the time of baptism, Jesus had dedicated himself to the mission of the Kingdom as his life purpose. To understand his teachings therefore, it is necessary first to know what interpretation of the Kingdom he adopted, what relationship he bore to that task and to God whom he represented. From the time of Peter's confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God",[2] it is apparent that Isaiah's idea of a suffering

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1 - Soares, T.G.: op. cit. Chap. XXIX

2 - Matthew 16:16

servant became his primary conception of his own life.[1]

> "So far, indeed, is the Christ of the Gospels from being the studied and self-conscious realization of the Messianic hope of the past, that it was not until the Christ had lived on earth that the true inwardness and meaning of those ancient ideals became manifest, and found at once their interpretation and fulfillment in the various natural expressions of the unique personality of the Son of Man."[2]

The great significance of Jesus for the world is in connection with his relation to the Father; he remade the world's revelation and approach to God. Therefore we can only understand Jesus by knowing his view of the Father, and we can only realize God through the Son.[3] Through his contact with the Father, he realized the true interpretation of the Kingdom. His idea of the Kingdom of God was not a realm in which the key-note was law observance; in which God was a Judge and Ruler. Moreover, mere birth did not give one entrance to this Kingdom.[4] At the time of the wilderness experience,[5] he definitely renounced the political and eschatological ideas. His understanding of this divine order among men was that of the prophets who said, "Ye are the sons of the living God,"[6] each of whom should address Jehovah as "My Father".[7] "We need both the Old Testament's imperative demand for a righteous nation and the New Testament's insistent emphasis upon the value of the individual soul; we need both the severity of justice and the tenderness of love."[8] This combination we have in Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom; an ideal social order in which the relation of men to God was that of sons and therefore the relation to each other was that of brothers.

1- Charles, R.H.: Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments, Chap. III.
2- Ibid, p. 95,96
3- Taken from lecture notes in Course, S.T. II-3, Life of Jesus,Dec.13,1927
4- Matt. 7:21,22; Luke 13:25
5- Matt. 4:1-10
6- Hosea 1:10c
7- Jeremiah 3:19c
8- Montefiore, C.G.: op cit. p. cxxxviii

III. JESUS' USE OF THE PARABLES

"He - They - We"

Their own concerns and this world's hopes
Shut out the wonder of His news;
And we, with larger knowledge, still
His Way refuse.

John Oxenham.

JESUS' QUALIFICATIONS FOR SOCIAL TEACHING

Jesus faced life's problems with a deep conviction of God's nature as Father, and man's position as son. He followed no scientific program of the sociologist; but met conditions as he found them. Much of his active ministry centered about Capernaum, the densest Jewish center of population in all Galilee. Beside it ran the great commercial routes from Egypt to Babylon. There, as in no other city, were gathered the "lost sheep of the house of Israel", and today it would be called the great slum city of Palestine. He carried out a social purpose in his own living; life and teaching always coincided. He mingled with all classes; dined with either the aristocratic Pharisee[1] or the social outcast, a tax-collector.[2] Even the fallen woman of the street was not beyond his circle.[3] He eagerly sought to establish close contacts with all classes and in the most practical ways. He constantly saw divine possibilities in men, and his sympathy continually went out to the socially ostracized, not in a sentimental way for no teacher ever held more insistently to the pragmatic test of values. He never fostered weakness and inefficiency, but he went to the weak because he saw potentialities which he might develop. The oldest Gospel records show that Jesus inaugurated a great democratic movement in his relation with his fellow men.

Jesus was no recluse or ascetic. He was alive to conditions about him. During his years in Nazareth, he was a member of a large family, which is always a fine opportunity for training in social contacts, citizenship and unselfishness. Moreover, Nazareth was a small town where

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1- Luke 7:36,37

2- Luke 19:1-10

3- John 8:3-11

[1] - Luke 7:36-37

[2] - Luke 19:1-10

[3] - John 8:3-11

there is splendid opportunity to touch the lives of others and view life in a familiar way. He delighted in fellowship. He was a rugged, stalwart man of the hills, keenly alive to all the beauties of nature and happy, human relationships.[1] It is significant that banquets and social functions figure so largely in his parables. Even the parable of the Prodigal Son ends with a banquet.[2] Jesus' life as he lived it among his fellow men was a natural intercourse, a fact which lends more weight to his teachings because he himself met the problems and temptations of a normal man and so consistently lived his belief that all his life followed in action what he thought and taught. Much time has been spent studying instances of his followers' attempts at a solution of the social question, when the teachings of Jesus himself should be the subject of study.

THE PARABLE IN JESUS' TEACHING

Justification of the Choice of Parables

The Gospels abound in material which would assist the student to see the whole industrial and social problem through Jesus' eyes. However, it would not be possible to cope with all the questions that such a study would arouse, nor could any sort of justice be done to the subject. Therefore, it is our purpose to confine ourselves to one phase of Jesus' teachings, namely, the Parables, which are so peculiarly well adapted for our purpose. About one-fourth of all Jesus' words as recorded in Mark's Gospel come under this classification and Luke's Gospel contains even a larger proportion. The story is the universal language of the world; a well told story always possesses charm and appeals to everyone regardless of age or class distinction, and its meaning is strikingly clear and remains

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1- Taken from lecture notes S.T. II-3, Life of Jesus

2- Luke 15:22-24

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undimmed. Jesus chose that method of teaching which would be most stimulating to the thoughtful, and most gripping for all. In the parables, Jesus wrapped up great, driving truths in a form which appealed to the imagination and feelings; to the emotions rather than to the intellect and so gripped where naked, spiritual truths would have been forgotten. "The loss of a love for stories may be the result of sophistication, but it is not an evidence of wisdom."[1]

Nature of the Parables

A parable is built on a single unit of comparison and moves from the consideration of the known or familiar to something similar in a different field. Teaching may be so illustrated as to make its precepts seem no longer unfamiliar, but rather credible and trustworthy as it is compared with a more general and otherwise valid rule.[2] Jesus was constantly elucidating his religious judgments by bringing them into comparison with familiar effects from the realm of nature and ordinary life so as to awaken all that was spiritual within a man. The parable was not a new invention on Jesus' part. Jesus' teachings, as we noted in our first chapter, were not cut off from all living connection with his nations's past, and here he made use of a familiar teaching instrument. The antecedent of the New Testament parable was the Old Testament parable and proverb. Perhaps the most illustrious users of parables before Jesus were Hillel and Schammai we are told, and the rabbis of his time were said to make constant use of them.[3] Jesus knew his Old Testament and found parables there. He also found parables in nature and life, so that he is said to have found, adopted and perfected the parable,[4] but so skillful was his use of this

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1- St. John, E. P.: Stories and Story-Telling, p. 5
2- Hastings, James,: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
3- Trench, R.C.: Parables of Our Lord, Chap. Vol. IX,p. 629
4- Hubbard, G.H.: Teachings of Jesus in Parables - Introduction.

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1- St. John, W. P.: Stories and Story-Telling, p. 6
2- Hastings, James: Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics.
3- French, R.C.: Parables of Our Lord, Chap. Vol. IX, p. 629
4- Hubbard, G.H.: Teachings of Jesus in Parables - Introduction.

device that generally it is associated with his name.

> "A rich fancy and an acute judgment were his equipment - a fancy which provided him with ever fresh material for his examples, pictures, and similitudes; acuteness of judgment which enabled him to grasp the essential point in the instance on hand, and to find the fittest phraseology and forms of presentation whereby the weightiest thoughts could be forcibly expressed."[1]

Types of Parables

The parables fall into two general classes; the first in which the reference is to some natural event or to some fact of human conduct which will give a rule in frequently recurring cases. Under this type came many short, oft-repeated sayings of Jesus which have become almost proverbial. For instance, "They that are whole have no need of a physician",[2] or "By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"[3] The distinctive mark of the second class lies in the fact that the illustration refers not to some frequently recurring general fact, but to a single event which has occurred in quite definite circumstances. Of course these may be in the realm of pure fancy, but the details are always such that they could have happened in actual life.[4] It is with the second class we will be especially concerned.

Sources of the Parables

It is interesting to notice from what sources Jesus drew his parables. There are at least twenty-eight examples which would naturally be classified under the second type referred to above. Of these, five illustrations were drawn from the life of an Oriental farmer; The Sower, The Tares, The Mustard Seed, The Growing Seed, and The Lost Sheep. Six

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1- Wendt, H.H.: Teachings of Jesus, Vol. I. p. 148
2- Mark 2:17
3- Matthew 7:16
4- Wendt, H.H.: Teachings of Jesus, Vol. I. Section 2, Chap. 1

were taken from situations that might arise between a master and his servants; The Unprofitable Servant, Laborers in the Vineyard, The Talents, The Unjust Steward, The Unmerciful Servant, and the Wicked Husbandmen. The relation of father and son gave the two known as The Prodigal Son and the Two Sons, while household matters called forth The Leaven and The Lost Coin. Neighborly relations suggested The Good Samaritan and The Friend at Midnight. Festal occasions provided three subjects; The Marriage of the King's Son, The Ten Virgins and The Great Supper. The influence of business life called forth, The Hid Treasure, The Pearl of Great Price, and The Two Debtors; while the parable of The Unjust Judge was from the realm of law. The use of wealth suggested two of the most tragic ones; Dives and Lazarus, and The Rich Fool. The life of the fisherman gave rise to The Drag Net. It is rather surprising to find that the typical realm of religion gave us but one, The Publican and Pharisee.

Purpose of Parabolic Teaching

In using this method so widely, Jesus must have had certain definite results in mind. It was said, of the general multitude, "All things are done in parables; that seeing, they may see, and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear, and not understand,"[1] but of the disciples Jesus said, "But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear."[2] However, other citations show that he expected to be understood; and manifested surprise when the disciples failed to grasp his idea, "Are ye so without understanding also?"[3] His enemies, the ones "who hearing hear not" often did understand, "And when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard

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1- Mark 4:11b, 12; also Matthew 13:13, Luke 8:10
2- Matthew 13:16
3- Mark 7:18b, also Matthew 15:16, Mark 4:13, 8:17,21; Luke 19:11

his parables, they perceived that he spake of them."[1] Many of his parables are so clear and direct that it does not seem possible that his purpose was other than their enlightenment. Jesus desired always that all should receive the mysteries of the kingdom; the only condition was receptivity on the part of his hearers.[2]

In the first place, this device aroused interest, and at the same time prevented his hearers from being repulsed by a too sudden revelation of the truth. Most of his followers had to receive his message as they could bear it, and had he spoken plainly at times they would have been repulsed. On the other hand there is no more decisive way of bringing reproof and exposure to conduct than through these vivid word pictures. Still further, they were a means of testing his hearers. Those who saw nothing in them but a story, turned away from them as trifling while those who caught the spirit inquired further and learned the full meaning. There is no way Jesus could have made himself more clearly understood by all men than by the story method.[3]

Method of Interpreting the Parable

One must determine what method of interpretation should be used to discover the true meaning of these stories. Many interpretations have been given each one, and some of them are so fanciful that it is evident one needs more than a willing heart and imagination in order to grasp the true significance. One needs to approach them with an intelligent understanding of Jesus' general plan of teaching; the situation which called forth the parable must be known, and interpretation should be drawn in the light of one's understanding of Jesus' mind and heart. One must decide how

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1- Matt. 21:45, also Mark 12:28, Luke 16:14

2- From notes in course S.T. II-4, Teachings of Jesus

3- Wendt. H.H.: Op. cit. Vol. I Sec. 2, Chap. 1.

much of the story is to be taken as significant to one's purpose.

Allegory

There are those who attempt to find a spiritual meaning in the minutest detail of the picture and so extend the interpretation that the real lesson is lost in a marvelous maze of figurative language. This problem is not a new one. Tertullian said, "There are details also which are simply inserted to build up, set forth and weave the parable, that men may be led to the point at which the illustration is aimed."[1] Chrysostom is said to have continually warned against pressing all the circumstances and often interrupted his own interpretation by saying, "Be not over-busy about the rest."[2] Each one was expressly told to strengthen one truth, and does not run into detail. The choice of a synonym, the turn of a phrase, or the rhythm of a sentence is part of an artistic whole, but does not necessarily carry a spiritual meaning.

As an illustration of the method of running into the interpretation of detail, there is the old analysis of the Parable of the Good Samaritan[3] in which the man who fell among thieves typified Adam, the thieves were the devil and his angels, the priest and Levite were the Mosaic dispensation, the Good Samaritan stood for Christ, the oil and wine were the comforts of the Gospel, while the beast was the humanity of Christ.[4] No practical lesson was pointed out by such fanciful notions. Such a treatment exercised one's imagination, but was deadening to the spiritual vitality of Jesus' message, and is one with which students of the parables must not become entangled. They are marvels of unity and condensation; every word is necessary but their strength lies in the

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1- Trench, R.C.: op. cit. quoted on p. 31
2- Trench, R.C.: op. cit. quoted on p. 32
3- Luke 10:30-37
4- Hubbard, G.H.: op. cit. Intro. XX

clearness with which they bring out one vital truth, and the discovery of this truth is the first requisite. The parables, therefore, are not allegories by which one may find through illustration a meaning, drawn from every detail. Jesus usually made clear at a glance the general statements he desired to express. For instance after the man who desired to justify himself asked, "And who is my neighbor?", Jesus gave the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In many of them it would be impossible to press the meaning of the details because they present no analogy to the spiritual lesson. This is seen in the case of the story of the Ten Virgins. The main thought is that only those virgins would be admitted who kept themselves in readiness, even though the bridegroom were unexpectedly delayed. Where the details of lamps, oil, sleeping, the number five, and other non-essentials are used, the analogy breaks down. Perhaps the allegorising interpretation holds good in the case of the Prodigal Son in a wider degree. Jesus saw the relation of father and son as the most fitting emblem of God and man, yet even here there are limits. To use the method too far is likely to lead to arbitrary interpretations, or even to absurdities. Care must be taken to point out the main comparison even it it seem obvious.[1] The only exceptions to this rule are the parables of the Sower and the Tares. These are allegorical and were so interpreted by Jesus, neither did the disciples nor other listeners understand until the allegory was pointed out.[2]

Isolated Teachings

One must also be careful not to isolate the parables from Jesus' ministry as a whole; one should view them as parts of the general whole with the particular occasion which called them forth. As we interpret we should remember that thought is of greater

1- Wendt, H.H.: Op. cit. vol. 1, sec. 2, Chap. I
2- Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; 13:24-30, 36-43

importance than word, and that a sentence wrenched from its context may be so misleading as to be untruthful. Jesus' style is so concrete and his word pictures so perfect that we are likely to forget that the parable can enforce only an analogy, and that the real teaching lies not in its form, but in its comparison, and that the background is necessary for true interpretation.

Sources of Doctrine

We must constantly remember also that the parables are not to be made primary sources of doctrines, but rather as illustrations or confirmations of principles otherwise established. By way of illustration we may look to Cocceius and his followers, known as the Federal School of thought in the seventeenth century, who correctly said the parables declared the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but went on to narrow the idea of the kingdom. They believed that each and every one of the parables was a part of the history of the kingdom's progressive development in the world down to their own day. None were allowed to be merely ethical, but all were to be historico-prophetical. These scholars connected them with certain fixed periods of that development, and as soon as these periods were completed, the parables were lost in the completion, as would any completed prophecy.[1] Their method of interpreting has followers even today.

Basic Truths

We must sum up Jesus' various instructions on a given subject and then compare the different parables, but with it all, we must not forget the habitual thinking of his life in regard to those questions. No one social type monopolized the sympathy or acceptance of Jesus and certainly he never desired to set one social class against another. His thought moved in a sphere where such distinctions were unimportant because his was a profounder view of man.

1- Peabody, F.G.: op. cit. Chap. 4

His categories of social judgment are not those of wealth and poverty. His thought was directed to the accomplishment of the Kingdom of God, and whatever contributed to that ideal he accepted. With him social groups were lost in a larger companionship and as we try to discover his thought and teachings we must try to get his view point of life, not only of the work-a-day world, but of its wider relation to the Kingdom of God. He used conditions as he found them, applied concrete truths that he believed were perfectly harmonious with God's plan, and let individuals and society diagnose their own particular trouble and apply the needed remedy.

IV. CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLES

IV. SIMPLIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE NETWORK

HIS WAY

He taught them his new simple law
Of Right 'twixt God and man,
And showed them how from that would grow
Right too 'twixt man and man

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Give love and love will fill your life;
Give hate and hate is yours;
For as you give, so you receive
And shall while life endures.

John Oxenham

IV. CLASSIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE PARABLES

CLASSIFICATION

The central theme of the parables, as in all Jesus' teaching, is the Kingdom of God. In treating the subject of the kingdom, the question constantly arises concerning God's will and ways toward men, and on the other hand, concerning man's proper attitude towards God, and his relation toward his fellow men. With this as a background, an analysis of the parables for their social teachings will be according to the following classification: first, God as Father; second, the nature and development of the kingdom; third, the conduct of the members of the kingdom. The first consideration falls into two phases: the interpretation of God which was held by the Jewish leaders and the conception of Jesus himself, which will be illustrated by three parables; The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, and The Lost Son. The second division also contains two parts: first, the kingdom, the supreme value as exemplified by the parables of The Hid Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price; second, the development of the kingdom among men as is seen in the parables of The Sower, The Growing Seed, The Mustard Seed, and The Leaven. The third study concerning the conduct of the members has four points: first, conduct towards God as is brought out in The Unprofitable Servant, The Two Sons, and The Publican and Pharisee; second, the members' conduct towards their fellow men as shown by The Good Samaritan and The Unmerciful Servant; third, conduct towards wealth interpreted by The Rich Fool, The Unrighteous Steward, and Dives and Lazarus; fourth, the members' stewardship of endowments as seen in The Laborers in the Vineyard and The Talents.

GOD AS FATHER

The Interpretation of the Religious Leaders

"Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.'"[1] This statement gives the prevailing characteristic of Jesus' ministry; namely, that it drew the outcasts and sinners, and aroused the unfavorable criticism of the religious rulers. Jesus did not repel the outcasts as though he feared defilement but received them graciously, taught them, and lived in social relationship with them.[2]

The Old Testament form of righteousness meant separation from sinners; a form of righteousness which may have been needful in the early days of Israel's history, when the influence of heathenism threatened Israel's national existence; but in Jesus' day, there was one among them whose righteousness was greater than their sin, and who could bring them needed help. To the Pharisees, Jehovah was a great, supreme King and Judge who weighed one's deeds and rewarded according to one's righteousness, a God to whom man's relationship was legal subjection and servile obedience. Such a Judge was to be worshiped through a careful zeal for the minutest point of the law, for one could only hope to win his grace by strictest conformity of heart and deed to his will as expressed in manifold commandments. Their emphasis was laid on formal accuracy, and often the inner purpose and spirit of the commandment was lost, and even various subtleties were adopted in order to evade the unpleasantness involved. Haughty self-complacency and arrogance usually characterized those who felt they had succeeded above ordinary men in their observances. The masses of men who were unable to keep the law were sinners, despised and

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1- Luke 15:1,2

2- Trench, R.C. op. cit. Chap. XXII

condemned by these religious aristocrats.[1] Jesus came bringing a teaching that went straight to the heart, and condemned cold, unbrotherly ceremonialism and ritual. He spoke to men's consciences and the religious leaders were aroused and"murmured."

As Jesus came in contact with different types of people, he found that the publicans, sinners, and social outcasts were often more ready and eager to accept the truth and enter the kingdom of heaven than were the self-satisfied religionists. The sinners had no preconceived notions of their own righteousness; they could be taught, for they were openminded, and had time for the kingdom because they realized their need. Jesus had met again and again the practical working out of this statement. There was "Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons,"[2] who was not afraid to stand at the cross, and whose love took her early to the tomb; a redeemed woman whose spiritual insight grew clear and refined. Another sinful woman braved criticism and sacrificed her means to give concrete expression to her love as "she wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with ointment."[3] His ungracious host and the other guests murmured against the Teacher who was so spiritually blind that he could not discern the woman was a sinner, but Jesus said, "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much;"[4] Zaccheus, the socially ostracized publican, when he realized the nature of the kingdom was so desirous of making restitution for all his past wrong that Jesus said, "Today is salvation come to this house,"[5] while the self-righteous critics' only understanding of the situation was that "He is gone to lodge with a man that is a sinner."[6]

1- Mark 16:9b
2- Mark 16:9b
3- Luke 7:38b,c,
4- Ibid v. 47a,b.
5- Luke 19:9a
6- Ibid v. 7b

Such experiences as these were constantly taking place. Those seeking the truth and willing to face the consequences, listened to Jesus gladly, and he ministered to their needs in a friendly way, but growing opposition from his enemies met him at every turn. In order to give this multitude of different classes, a vivid picture of the fatherhood of God as he had experienced it, Jesus gave them the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son.

Jesus' Conception of God and the Individual

The Lost Sheep[1] "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, and having lost one of them, doth not.....go after that which is lost until he find it?"[2] In this parable, Jesus set forth the idea of the seeking love of the father, under the guise of a shepherd who sought for a wandering sheep. It was not merely the monetary loss of the sheep that stirred the shepherd, but in the nature of a shepherd, he must seek a lost sheep. He sought "till he had found it," and then he tenderly "layeth it on his shoulders" and carried it back to the fold. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."[3]

Jesus implied that he too was a shepherd, and in the nature of a shepherd, he must find the lost rather than peacefully enjoy those who did not need him. The enemies' opposition arose because they did not recognize him as a shepherd; a blindness that was due to their want of love for their fellow men whom they considered social outcasts and against whom they were hardened by prejudice and pride. To Jesus' view, the despised masses of Jewish society were scattered and lost. His own heart was filled with compassion and he desired to awaken love in the hearts of his audience, but

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1- Luke 15:3-7
2- Ibid. v. 4 a,b,d.
3- Ibid

if they would not rejoice with him over the safe return of a sinner, God and heaven would.[1]

The Lost Coin[2] "Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not..... seek diligently until she find it?"[3] Here again everything was done to find the lost article, although the lost coin in itself was not exceedingly valuable. It suggests that the meanest sinner's return to the Father calls forth joy in the heart of God. Each soul is precious in God's sight and each has value in his esteem. This was a new teaching to the self-righteous Pharisees who had little regard or interest for the masses of humanity. Jesus tried to tell them that all souls, even those of publicans and harlots, were so valuable in God's sight,[4] that he counted no sacrifice too great to reclaim the lost.

The Lost Son[5] "A certain man had two sons ..... and the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country."[6] The young man, unable to find satisfaction in the presence of his father, went away to live a life entirely apart from him. "But when he came to himself, he said... "I will arise and go to my father."[7] He drank the cup of pleasure and found that his satisfaction could be procured only by returning home, and "while he was yet afar off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion."[8]

In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus most clearly expressed the contrast between the view of God as Father, and the legal conviction of the relation between God and man. The purpose of the story was to bring out

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1- Bruce, A.B.: The Parabolic Teaching of Christ, Book II, Chap. I
2- Luke 15:8-10
3- Ibid. v.8
4- Bruce, A.B.: op.cit. Chap.II
5- Luke 15:11-32
6- Ibid. v. 11b; 13b,c.
7- Ibid. v. 17a,18a
8- Ibid. 15:20b,c

the pardoning, bountiful grace of God to repentant sinners in contrast to the view which supposed that God could only reward righteous actions by a strictly equivalent recompense.[1] In the two earlier parables, the emphasis was largely on the seeking love of God, while this one brought out the necessary repentance on the part of man as he comes in contact with the forgiving love of God. In the former ones, there was no opportunity to speak of the changed heart and mind, but the third one emphasized this point, thus making the three necessary for a whole picture. It also shows one that a son of God can find real satisfaction only when he is in true filial relation to the Father and that the Father's love is always waiting to receive a returning child. He also longs for his children to trust in His love and give Him a chance to bring them to the finest expression of themselves in Him.

The eldest son heard the merrymaking in his brother's honor and inquired the reason, "but he was angry, and would not go in."[2] The conclusion drawn from the unbrotherly attitude of the elder son again contrasted the loving forgiveness of the father and the true repentance of the sinner with the retributive blame of the other; a personification of the legalistic point of view. The cold repulsion of the formal ceremonialist had it been the attitude of the father would have been a denial of father love, as it was a violation of the brotherly relation.[3]

Again Jesus emphasized his position by the use of this story; if God were so interested in those who had strayed away from the finest and best, then surely as one who best understood and interpreted God's love, it was highly appropriate that he should be found as a brother among the publicans and sinners; each one of whom was a precious child in his Father's sight.

1- Luke 15:28a
2- Wendt, H. H.: op. cit. p. 194-202
3- Wendt, H. H.: op. cit. p. 194-202

This principle lies at the heart of all social values; each individual is of utmost value in the Father's sight and anything which stands in the way of the fullest development of the personality is a sin against one of his children, and therefore against Himself. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."[1] As children of our Father it is our mission to endeavor to make it possible for every child to secure his rightful heritage.

NATURE AND ADVENT OF THE KINGDOM

As of Supreme Value

The kingdom idea as inherited by Jesus was social in the sense that God's will was to be realized and done among men. In that kingdom Israel hoped to find all her agelong dreams realized. In Jesus' conception of God as the loving Father, lay the deeper foundation of his ideas of the kingdom of God. He found in God's paternal love, an ideal social relationship which would bring mankind the blessings of the kingdom. He represented the kingdom of God as the highest good which could come to men; a blessing which should be the object of their desire before all earthly possessions, and one which they should constantly strive to establish on earth.

The Hid Treasure / The Pearl of Great Price[2] "Kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure,"[3] and "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls."[4] These two parables, which constitute together but one text, are important in teaching the incomparable value of the kingdom. When and to whom these parables were spoken cannot be decided with absolute certainty. From the manner in which Matthew has recorded them,

1- Matthew 25:40b
2- Matthew 13:44-46
3- Ibid. v. 44a
4- Ibid. v. 45

one would be led to believe that they were not spoken to the multitude, but to the inner circle of disciples as they came to him in the house[1] and asked for further enlightenment. Others believe that Matthew, in his editorial way, has simply inserted them here to complete one of his customary exhibits of teachings,[2] and so it might have been addressed to a different audience than Matthew's account implies.

> "The two emblems employed by Jesus were fitly spoken to impress an ancient Eastern audience, and to serve in their case the purpose intended - that of representing the kingdom of heaven as the Absolute Good, and as such worthy that everything should be given in exchange for it."[3]

In the first, the treasure was accidentally found, while in the second, the merchant was "seeking goodly pearls."[4] It may be that suddenly in the midst of other pursuits, the individual may be brought face to face with truth and unexpectedly find eternal things. The man who went in search of the pearl, realized there was something of value yet lacking among his possessions.

The important thing in both parables is the thing found. The joy of the Kingdom makes one willing to give up all else; it is a wealth in comparison with which all other possessions are nothing, is the teaching of Jesus in these two parables.[5] The farmer "in his joy goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."[6] The pearl merchant, "having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it."[7] The conduct of the men in the two parables was reasonable; both were the gainers in selling all for the sake of obtaining a more precious object.

The conscientious disciples of the Rabbis had devoted everything to the study of the law because they believed it to be the chief good.

1- Matthew 13:36
2- Bruce, A.B.: op. cit. Book I. Chap. III
3- Bruce, A.B.: op. cit. p. 71
4- Matthew 13:45b
5- Hubbard, G.H.: op. cit. Chap.VI.
6- Matthew 13:44b
7- Ibid. v. 46

Others were just as zealous in their devotion to pleasure or wealth, because they believed those to be the highest good. Jesus here desired to impress his hearers with the fact that among lesser good things, there was one possession, in comparison with which all others paled into insignificance. The first group of parables showed that there is a sense in which the kingdom of heaven is free, the gift of God's grace; these teach that in another sense, it is the most costly thing because it means the surrender of all else. Jesus with true insight realized that only by the possession of such a treasure could man's real longings and needs be satisfied.

The buyers made their sacrifice willingly, so must the purchasers of the kingdom come in free obedience and not under constraint. Jesus allowed no legal, cheerless view to enter the story of this transaction; the sacrifice is made to appear the natural result of joy over the discovery of such a treasure. Both men welcomed the kingdom when they found it although one found it when he was not looking for it, while the other found it after a long quest. The publicans and sinners in Jesus' day were not consciously seeking the kingdom, but these poor despised ones recognized a treasure when they stumbled upon it. There were those even then among the Jews, who still looked with longing for the Messiah, the hope of Israel; men who recognized him in Jesus of Nazareth. All these alike welcomed the good when they discovered it.[1]

The problems of society can only reach a final and entirely satisfactory solution when men realize what constitutes the highest value to be pursued. Many of the things which have been considered valuable have been the cause of blindness to the supreme treasure; the attainment

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[1]- Bruce. A.B.: op. cit. Book I. Chap. III

of which can satisfy every phase of man's personality and enable him to judge the things of the world by their true value, and free him from slavery to tangible, transitory treasures.

Development of the Kingdom among Men

Having considered Jesus' conception of God as Father, and his idea concerning the worth of the individual in God's sight, as well as his ideas based on that interpretation concerning the value of the kingdom, one must understand his view concerning the development of the kingdom among men on earth. His ideas of its nature and coming would necessarily correspond with his views concerning God and man, and those ideas, as has been pointed out, emphasized the fatherhood of God and the sonship of man. Such interpretations precluded any ideas of an external and political kingdom, nor would there be earthly prosperity and power. The Pharisees' thought and conduct centered around the idea of a political kingdom miraculously established with outward pomp. Such a conception made it impossible for them to recognize that a kingdom might already be in existence.[1] The disciples came in contact with those prevailing ideas, which hindered their full appreciation of Jesus' spiritual ideal, and made that lofty conception seem unattainable and therefore a discouraging mission to which Jesus called them to devote their lives. In order to prepare his followers for the attitudes they would meet and to enable them to perceive the kingdom's progress even in seeming failure, he spoke a number of parables which throw added light on the nature of this kingdom in the present world.

The Sower[2] "Behold the sower went forth to sow."[3] This parable rests on one of the common familiar activities of

1- Wendt, H.H.: op. cit. Chap. V.
2- Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23; Mark 4:3-8, 14-20; Luke 8:5-8, 11-15
3- Ibid. v. 3B

daily life; no hearer would have difficulty in understanding a thing that was constantly before his eyes. Great multitudes gathered about Jesus as he sat by the seaside, and he shaped his teachings to the occasion. However, they knew that he meant more than met the ear, and although they may have had a dim understanding of the spiritual meaning, the details had to be explained. The disciples wondered at his use of a type of teaching which was not entirely clear to these crowds. The answer must lie in the moral situation. Probably before Jesus in that audience there were men who could be divided into the four classes described in the parable. The Galilean enthusiasm was at its height, therefore a crisis was at hand, and this parable foreshadowed the result and was designed to make the hearers examine themselves.

Jesus in a parabolic way related his own personal experiences in order to warn the disciples not to expect that all men would eagerly receive his ideal as the long desired solution for life's problems. The growth of the seed is determined by the nature of the soil. The disciples were pleased that great throngs crowded about their teacher, but he perceived the danger of trusting to such an indication of success, and knew that many would bring forth no harvest.

"Some seeds fell by the wayside."[1] Thoughtlessness and spiritual stupidity marked the first class, a condition due not so much to lack of capacity as to interest in other treasures than the kingdom. Such a mind was seen in the man who interrupted Jesus on one occasion to say, "Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,"[2] a mind constantly centered on some selfish thought. There were men in Jesus' audience whose thought of the kingdom was only concerned with worldly prosperity for themselves.

1- Luke 12:4b
2- Luke 12:13

"Others fell upon the rocky places."[1] Another type of hearers was marked by emotional excitability and thoughtless impulsiveness. They listened joyously but with little thought; they had not counted the cost of securing the kingdom when the wave of enthusiasm passed and they were left face to face with temptations, their religion shriveled under the heat. There were great crowds eager to hear any Messianic teaching as was evidenced in the experience of John the Baptist. Many started out hopeful of any easy religious career, but the rigorous and unexpected demands placed upon the members of the kingdom caused them to fall by the wayside.

"And others fell upon the thorns."[2] Another class of hearers did not lack depth, nor understanding, but their minds were full of other seeds and hence there were two crops struggling for mastery, and the better would fail to mature. These hearers' wills were divided, men who could not victoriously enter the kingdom because it was not of supreme importance in their lives.[3] But a fourth class was present; "Others fell upon good ground."[4] These were willing to place first things first, to whom the kingdom was the pearl of great price.

Jesus pointed out that always there are divisions among men and that sometimes those who appear most worthy and fruitful in the religious realm are not the ones who will finally bring forth a harvest. Casual observers would have said the scribes and Pharisees were fruitful seed in the kingdom, but Jesus perceived the beaten paths and thorns and knew that many others would persis beyond them. The kingdom can never be measured

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1- Matthew 13:5a
2- Matthew 13:7a
3- Bruce, A.B.: op. cit. Book 1. Chap. I
4- Matthew 13:8a

by outward appearances, nor can exact computation be made as to its fruition. Much that would be planted would be slow in growth and much would be in vain, but he was confident that the seed contained the life of God and could raise men to higher life, for he had seen it planted in the hearts of outcasts and reprobates who rose to a newness of life.[1] He believed in the power of the kingdom ideal and flung it forth without fear.

The Growing Seed[2]

Lest the disciples should feel that their task was hopeless and that the kingdom could never be established on earth, Jesus spoke another parable of the growing seed. In this, he showed that growth in the kingdom proceeds spontaneously by fixed laws.[2]

"The earth beareth fruit of itself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."[3] The vital process is slow, it is secret, and spontaneous because of an indwelling force. All that man can do is to leave the forces free for best action, and growth of the seed will be sure. There is no more uncertainty in the spiritual world than in the natural where the seed grows. A spiritual harvest is just as sure as a grain harvest if the same care and skill are used.[4] Human trust and obedience linked with divine power results in a complete transformation of character in both the individual and society; they grow together. Again, Jesus showed that he believed in the kingdom's growth and was not surprised that his success was small, the future would bring the reward of redeemed individuals in true relationship to the Father.[5]

Mustard Seed[6]

"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed."[7] Jesus spoke in parables to illustrate further

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1- Rall. H.F.: op. cit. Chap. XVII
2- Mark 4:26-29
3- Ibid. v. 28
4- Hubbard, G.H.: op. cit. Chap. II
5- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Book I, Chap. VIII
6- Matthew 13:31,32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18,19
7- Matthew 13:31b

the fact that the kingdom of God already existed on earth, and that from an insignificant beginning it would grow to unexpected proportions; as does the mustard seed. Worldly minded Jews could not believe that so mean a thing as they saw in the organization of the twelve could grow to a kingdom whose influence would shape civilization. On the other hand, his humble picture of it would not arouse false hopes in the hearts of the disciples.

Leaven[1] "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven."[2] Closely connected with the parable of the Mustard Seed is this one concerning the leaven. Although there was no obvious external appearances to prove the existence of Jesus' ideal, yet the idea of its existence was no mere abstract conception or even something purely ideal. He himself had experienced its reality and he knew his disciples would also experience it. He perceived its influence already upon his immediate followers, and knew that this kingdom was largely an inward one, existing in the hearts of those who believed his teachings.[3] This parable showed them that the Kingdom produced inward transformation which can only be discerned by the moral sense. The action of leaven is not so much to change the size of the lump of dough as it is to change its condition. The kingdom ideal would exert influence on the heart and life of those who received it, and they in turn would themselves become leaven to exert an influence upon the world. The kingdoms of this world were concerned chiefly in their outward growth and so the Kingdom of heaven was a proposition hard to be understood. The kingdom Jesus introduced came not with observation, but was present in the hearts of a few simple fishermen, tax gatherers and sinners released from their guilt, who were the leavened lump which by contagion to others would leaven the whole mass.[4]

1- Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20
2- Matthew 13:33b
3- Wendt, H.H.: op. cit. Chap. V
4- Bruce, A.B.: op. cit. Chap. VII

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3 - Wendt, H.H.: op. cit. Chap. V
4 - Bruce, A.B.: op. cit. Chap. VII

The Christian influence pervades the whole of society; it is an ennobling, spiritualizing force in the hearts of people, a power that can perfect the individual and through changed individuals all society can be transformed. The power of Christianity lies in this all pervading influence of Christian character and only by the touch of man upon his brother can this leaven reshape society. Social regeneration will not come by any apocalyptic or political event, but through social individuals who have entered the kingdom. The seed is small, and much of the harvest is lost on unprepared soil, but the seed is sown, and ultimately the full corn will appear. Society can only hope to perfect itself through the Kingdom ideal, and after all social panaceas have failed, men will turn to the fundamental conception of the brotherhood of man based on the fatherhood of God.

CONDUCT OF THE MEMBERS OF THE KINGDOM

Conduct towards God

The fact that Jesus laid stress on the fatherly relation of God to man, does not exclude the recognition of his supremacy and the obedience and honor due to him. In the light of Jesus' interpretation of God, the understanding of the required conduct of the Father's children is to be discovered.[1]

The Unprofitable Servant[2] "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you say, 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.'" There is seemingly no connection between this parable and the previous verses in Luke's gospel, so that it is impossible to gather any interpretation from the situation. The Pharisees' idea of legality, equity, and retribution in religion defined righteousness to them. On first glance, this parable seems to give a legal, heartless representation of the relation between God and man, as though he were an exacting taskmaster. However, such interpretation is not in accordance with the

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[2] - Luke 17:7-10

general trend of Jesus' thought, for he constantly sought to counteract legalism.

The service of God is an arduous task, one that constantly brings extra duties and demands upon one's service. One might be allowed to paraphrase the meaning by saying that Jesus was here teaching "Men ought always to work and not faint."[1] The Pharisee who felt he had fulfilled his religious duties when he had obed the letter, had no place in his program for extra service. He would say, "I have done enough;" a true son of the kingdom would never be able to make such a statement. The former were slaves in spirit who deserved no thanks for their duty done. God's children are not slaves, they are sons whose service arises out of entirely different motives from that of slavish natures.[2] Jesus himself experienced the burning desire to be constantly about his Father's business and conceived of all the sons as equally zealous to bring in the Kingdom of God among men, a task which calls for every ounce of patience and endurance. The rank of sonship brings the heavy responsibility of steadfastly making all sons of one Father.

Two Sons[3] Jesus' idea of righteousness denoted a disposition for action which took the will of God as its highest standard. This parable arose out of an occurrence in which Jesus had been put upon the defensive by his opponents who asked him to prove his authority. He spoke this parable to bring a charge of insincerity against the Pharisees in their behavior towards John the Baptist.

Here the emblem of an insincere generation is a son who answered his father's command to work in his vineyard by saying, "I go, sir,"[4] and after all did not go. They had said, "I go, sir" by showing the outward aspects

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1- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. p. 173
2- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Chap. VII
3- Matthew 21:28-32
4- Ibid. v. 30c

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1- Grace, A.D. op. cit. p. 173
2- Grace, A.D. op. cit. Chap. VII
3- Matthew 21:28-32
4- Ibid. v. 30c

of religion, but their lives proved their hypocrisy. The social outcasts by their lives had said, "I will not,"[1] but had responded by repentance. Members of the kingdom must prove their relationship by a spirit of obedience to the Father's call of service.[2]

In the interpretation of the parable, it is not a question of which son was better; both did wrong and Jesus did not excuse their sin. The point is, "whether of the twain did the will of his father?"[3] Classes of men are not the primary contrast here, but two relations men may bear God.[4] The problem is not as to which was the more disobedient, but which was the true son. Only obedient service in the affairs of the Father can prove our real relationship to him. Jesus lifted religion out of the realm of the official and put it into the personal by asserting that a true son is one who sees things according to God's point of view.

The Publican and the Pharisee[5] "Two men went up into the temple to pray."[6] Still a third parable helps to explain the proper conduct of members of the Kingdom. The teachings in general have stressed the fact that Jesus counted value of righteousness as it sprang from the heart, while man judged by external words and acts. The Pharisee who accounted himself righteous, and in an ostentatious prayer told both man and God how superior he was, was judged as less righteous than the publican "who neither claimed nor had the external appearance of righteousness, but only begged for God's forgiveness."[7]

1- Matthew 21:29b
2- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Book III, Chap.III
3- Matthew 21:31a
4- Hubbard, G.H. op. cit. Chap. XXX
5- Luke 18:9-14
6- Ibid. v. 10a
7- Wendt, H.H. op. cit. p. 265

Jesus took his stand against the teaching and practice of external righteousness as it was seen among many of the religious leaders. Jesus carried this thought of heart righteousness farther than any Old Testament prophet had dared. He went so far as to show that the heart alone is the basis of the value of conduct towards God and men, and that external deeds are worthless apart from the motive which prompted it. Therefore "he spake also this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and set all others at nought."[1] The text does not say it was addressed as a warning to the Pharisees, but "unto certain who trusted in themselves." It would be well to remember that among Jesus' own followers he had seen indications of the same superior attitude.[2] The Pharisee, a representative of the class who attempted to perfect righteousness by outward ceremonialism had never learned to allow God to search his heart. The publican, an example of all who have found their sins heavy, but who yearn to be delivered was willing to be searched. It does not mean that the publican was a just man and the Pharisee not, but that the contrite publican was nearer the approval of God than the other who approved himself. The one was really asking God to endorse the good opinion he had of himself, the other could only cry, "God, be thou merciful to me, a sinner."[3]

"And the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven,"[4] This man's humble attitude gives us a picture of the result which a true understanding of the Father's loving nature brings to a man whose heart is open to the truth and its consequences. To the seeking heart in God's presence, there could be only a deep feeling of humility and unworthiness. To such as he, there could be no feeling of superior

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1- Luke 18:9
2- Wendt, H. H. op. cit. Chap. IV
3- Luke 18:13d
4- Luke 18:13a

self-satisfaction that he differed from other men. His attitude meant humble reverence before God and a humble charity towards the sins of others because his own seemed the blackest of all. Sonship means heart searching analysis of one's own inner attitude toward the Father; a searching that can only result in humble repentance and a desire to help others find the righteousness of the Kingdom.

One's attitude towards God determines one's attitude toward others. To the man who is untiringly working in cooperation with God for the Kingdom, every situation on earth which hinders the coming of that ideal is a challenge to his untiring service. To him, the need of his fellow man is a command from God, "Son, go work today in the vineyard,"[1] for the need must be met in behalf of the Father. Such understanding of God's fatherhood makes the individual very conscious of his own unworthiness and the greatness of his responsibility in representing God as his son. It means deep heart searchings and a humble dependence upon God's grace for wisdom.

CONDUCT TOWARDS FELLOW-MAN

The Good Samaritan[2]

A practical proof of one's sonship in the kingdom of God is the conduct one shows towards other sons of that Father. "If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother; he is a liar."[3]

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up to tempt Him, saying: 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life'?"[4] The connection in which this parable was spoken is very definitely stated. The parable was an answer to the lawyer's later question, "Who is my neighbor?" but it was

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1- Matthew 21:28c
2- Luke 10:25-37
3- I John 4:20a
4- Luke 10:25

self-satisfaction that he differed from other men. His attitude meant humble reverence before God and a humble charity towards the sins of others because his own seemed the blackest of all. Sonship means heart searching analysis of one's own inner attitude toward the Father; a searching that can only result in humble repentance and a desire to help others find the righteousness of the Kingdom.

One's attitude towards God determines one's attitude toward others. To the man who is untiringly working in cooperation with God for the Kingdom, every situation on earth which hinders the coming of that ideal is a challenge to his untiring service. To him, the need of his fellow man is a command from God, "Son, go work today in the vineyard,"[1] for the need must be met in behalf of the Father. Such understanding of God's fatherhood makes the individual very conscious of his own unworthiness and the greatness of his responsibility in representing God as his son. It means deep heart searchings and a humble dependence upon God's grace for wisdom.

CONDUCT TOWARDS FELLOW-MAN

The Good Samaritan[2] A practical proof of one's sonship in the Kingdom of God is the conduct one shows towards other sons of that Father. "If a man say, 'I love God,' and hateth his brother; he is a liar."[3]

"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up to tempt Him, saying: 'Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'"[4] The connection in which this parable was spoken is very definitely stated. The parable was an answer to the lawyer's later question, "Who is my neighbor?" but it was

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1- Matthew 21:28c
2- Luke 10:25-37
3- I John 4:20a
4- Luke 10:25

asked as an evasion by a man who was not in earnest about his question concerning eternal life. The man is not described as having a treacherous spirit as were some of Jesus' questioners who plotted against his life, and Jesus' time and care in answering him seem to prove that he did not consider him a dangerous foe, or a critical quibbler. Probably the lawyer had heard of Jesus' fame and came to prove to his own satisfaction, the wisdom of Jesus, and so propounded his question.[1] Jesus referred him to his own law, and the man quoted the law that Jesus accepted as a true statement of righteousness. "But he desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor."[2] The fact that he would ask such a question, showed how little he understood the boundless love characteristic of the kingdom of God. He was willing to set limits about his realm of service and kindness; an attitude entirely at variance with Jesus' idea of brotherhood among all the sons of the father.

"A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho."[3] The story does not say that the man who fell among thieves was a Jew, but the spirit of the illustration leads us to take that for granted. "By chance,"[4] a priest and Levite came that way; by coincidence, the one man's needs were brought to the attention of two persons whose professions would lead one to expect them to be anxious to serve a fellow in distress, but they lost their opportunity. "But a certain Samaritan came where he was,"[5] a man of a different race and one upon whom the two earlier travelers would have looked with utter contempt. However, "he was moved with compassion,"[6] and that was all that was necessary. Love knows no boundaries, is not con-

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1- Trench, H.C. Chap. XVII
2- Luke 10:29
3- Ibid. 30b
4- Ibid. v. 31a
5- Ibid. v. 33a
6- Ibid. v. 33c

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1- Trench, R.C. Chap. XVII
2- Luke 10:29
3- Ibid. 30b
4- Ibid. v. 31a
5- Ibid. v. 33a
6- Ibid. v. 33c

scious of class distinctions; wherever there is need, there love finds a place for its service. From that point on through the story, Jesus gave details showing the Samaritan's unselfish use of his time and mone, and made the contrast a vivid one between the selfish Levite and priest and the generous Samaritan.

Jesus closed the story by asking the lawyer a question, "which of these three, thinkest thou, proved neighbor unto him that fell among the robbers?"[1] He had shown him who his neighbor was by showing him what love is. This lawyer, like the Pharisees, knew the law to love the Lord and "thy neighbor as thyself", but they hated and despised all who were not Jews. Jesus stripped religion bare of all such pretences and in this parable gave a definition of true religion which in the presence of human need knows no prejudices and hatreds. Again he emphasized the fundamental importance of motives in harmony with God and life; the antithesis of pride and race distinction. The ones who possess the joys of the kingdom are the ones who are in harmonious adjustment to God and man.[2]

The Unmerciful Servant[3]

One proof of love is the willingness with which one will forgive another. Jesus regarded the desire for forgiveness as hypocritical if it did not result in a forgiving spirit in the individual's heart. He had been talking to his disciples after they had disputed as to which one should be greatest in the Kingdom, and then Peter asked, "How oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him?"[4] and Jesus answered by using this parable. The question showed that there was the spirit of ambition among the disciples, a tendency which made one very charitable towards one's own sin, but very unforgiving towards wrong done

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1- Luke 10:36
2- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XVIII
3- Matthew 18:23-35
4- Ibid. v. 21b

by another. Jesus took the occasion to warn his followers and to go beyond that and show them how to behave in such a situation. As the kingdom ideal sets no limit to love, neither does it limit the forgiving spirit. Jesus went as far beyond Peter's "seven times" as Peter had gone beyond the rabbis. Jesus implies that the number of times one should forgive depends upon the number of times one is wronged.

The unforgiving man is shown first as one of whom much had been forgiven. He was a steward trusted with great sums of money, who when he was in danger of being sold for the huge debts he had amassed, promised impossible things, and fell down to worship his master. "And the lord of that servant being moved with compassion, released him, and forgave the debt."[1] The wonderful forgiving spirit of the master is enhanced by the certain statement in regard to the unusual size of the debt for whatever basis is taken as the method of reckoning the amount of "ten thousand talents", it was a huge sum. However, God's severity lasted only until the sinner acknowledged his guilt, and then he was forgiven. It would be only natural to expect that one who had the rich experience of such a loving forgiveness would be most charitable to his fellows.

"But that servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred shillings, and he laid hold on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay what thou owest."[2] When he heard the same appeal from another as he had used, he not only remained unmoved, but insisted on the most rigid enforcement of law. He asked his lord to measure him by a different standard than the one he used by which to measure, and knew not that by his attitude towards others, he was condemning himself. His guilt lay in that having received mercy he refused to show it.[3]

1- Matthew 18:27
2- Matthew 18:28a,b
3- Trench, R.C. op. cit. Chap. VIII

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1- Matthew 18:27
2- Matthew 18:28a,b
3- French, B.C. op. cit. Chap. VIII

Jesus seems to have concluded his story by picturing God in a way very different from the loving Father. He was speaking to disciples who were to be his representatives and it was very necessary for them to fully grasp the necessity of forgiveness in their treatment of others. "So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not everyone his brother from your hearts."[1] Jesus loved dearly and rebuked and chastened faithfully.[2] To one who had glimpsed the meaning of God as Father and had sought forgiveness in true humility, there could be no room for an uncharitable attitude towards others, for all are brothers. In God's fatherly love Jesus found the inward motive for man's love to his fellow men.[3]

CONDUCT TOWARD WEALTH

The Rich Fool[4]

Since Jesus taught that the supreme value lay in the kingdom and that its possession meant eternal life, it is to be expected that he would be strong in his declaration against anything that he perceived would hinder men from attaining that ideal. He never seemed to consider earthly blessings as incompatible with the kingdom, but he tried to turn away the disciples' aspirations from earthly things by pointing out the trivial and transitory character of them, and their invidious charm.

One day in the midst of a discourse to a great multitude Jesus was interrupted by a man who asked that Jesus bid his brother divide the inheritance with him. This gave the Teacher an opportunity to point out vividly the lack of wisdom shown by any man who would set his mind and heart on things. Although Jesus refused to be entangled in civil affairs, he gave the man and the multitude something far more important and lasting;

1- Matthew 18:35
2- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Bk. II. Chap. VIII
3- Wendt, H.H. op. cit. Chap. IV
4- Luke 12:16-21

"Take heed, and keep yourselves from all covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth".[1]

Jesus pictured "a certain rich man" who had great possessions, but no life left, although he planned to live for years. He considered wealth his to use as he desired, "But God said, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee,"[2] so death proved bigger than his selfish plans. He had uncounted possessions, yet did not have satisfaction, and so was poor indeed. Money cannot purchase the true treasure. The man seems more pitiful in that he addressed his remarks to his soul, as though it could be fed on crops and money bags. Self and God are the two extremes, between which the soul is placed. If the first is chosen, then the man "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God".[3] It is the inner man that maketh one rich or poor, and he who has no spiritual affections and sympathies with others is poor towards God.[4]

The Unrighteous Steward.[5] Having warned his followers against covetousness, he at another time told the disciples a story to show them how to use their worldly goods prudently for God's world. Many are troubled because of the unrighteous conduct of the steward whom Jesus takes as an example, but the method of interpretation should be recalled, in that only one lesson is to be considered and not the details. He did not advise them to act as did this steward, but to use their possessions to acquire something more worthwhile.

"For the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light."[6] The children of light with spiritual insight into the true value of things, choose the better part, but they are inferior

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1- Luke 12:15
2- Ibid. v. 20a
3- Luke 12:21
4- Trench, C.R. op. cit. Chap.XXV
5- Luke 16:1-9
6- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Chap. VII

in their ability to use temporal things. What an opportunity did the sons of this world have to whom God had given a large share of "mammon".[1] The disciples should not miss such an opportunity as they might have to increase their heavenly treasure by a wise, brotherly use of their possessions; the opportunity to show the world they considered their wealth a gift of God to be ministered for the benefits of his Kingdom. Through the proper use of worldly things, a man may prove his fidelity and be entrusted with the stewardship of the riches of the kingdom of God.[2]

Dives and Lazarus[3]

The parable just considered emphasized the prudent use of wealth to further the kingdom of heaven, a parable which rebuked a trust in riches. Another parable was used to show the fearful consequences of a heart set on the world, one which is entirely indifferent to spiritual values. Jesus made clear in this parable the thing that he thoroughly hates is selfishness and a loveless spirit. "And the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things; and they scoffed at him."[4] While the Pharisees themselves were not squanderers, yet throughout the history of the Jews, they had considered wealth as a sign of God's favor, and disease and poverty as marks of sin and God's withdrawal.

Dives' spirit was proved by his attitude towards others, a hard-hearted contempt for the poor, and a luxurious squandering upon himself; a man who did not believe in the spiritual world and placed his hope in things which he could see, taste, and handle.[5] To him and to the worldly minded Pharisees, there was no thought of a kingdom beyond the grave. They did

1- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Chap. VII
2- Trench, op. cit. Chap. XXV
3- Luke 16:19-31
4- Ibid. V. 14
5- Trench, R.C. op. cit. Chap. XXVI

not even sense a kingdom of truth and love in the midst of a selfish world. The picture of Dives is not that of an oppressor of the weak; he is not said to have been a robber of the poor, nor a persecutor of widows and the unfortunate. He lived like a prince and was clothed like one, "faring sumptuously."[1] His sin is described as a total blindness to the needs of a fellow man who was at his very gate. Lazarus was the urgent, evident opportunity for Dives to assert his humanity before it was entirely atrophied.

The picture of Lazarus shows one as miserable as the other was splendid. He fed on the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, but a doling out of crumbs could not express brotherly compassion. Lazarus' condition was not benefitted by his stay at Dives' gate, and as a beggar he died. Then death caused an exchange of conditions. The man whose goodness was not even mentioned, went to Abraham's bosom, while the princely aristocrat was in misery. He had sought to save his life and has lost it. In torment, he cried, "send Lazarus."[2] How much more could Lazarus have done for the welfare of Dives had the latter grasped the opportunity to have been the ministering agent, if Dives had made a friend by the use of his worldly goods. The rich man himself had fixed the gulf which separated them. His selfish, loveless life could not be reversed the moment it became irksome, the gulf had been in the building for a lifetime.

Dives plead that his brothers might be warned, but the answer excludes all selfish excuse on the plea of ignorance or lack of opportunity. The parable plainly teaches that a selfish life is inexcusable and that however blind men are to the life to come, yet they have enough light to lead them to find a true way. They need never have had any doubt whether it were better to be good or evil; to be selfish and heartless or unselfish.

1- Luke 16:19c
2- Ibid. v. 24c

1- [illegible]
2- [illegible]

A man's profession of brotherhood is well tested by the call to use his worldly possession unselfishly. The man who feels he is a co-partner with God in establishing the kingdom will consider that life, wealth and ability are gifts bestowed upon him by a loving Father who expects him to administer them for the welfare of the family and to render an account back to God in regard to the service he has rendered.

Stewardship of Endowments

Laborers in the Vineyard[1]

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was a householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard."[2] The verses[3] which immediately precede this are necessary for an understanding of the parable. Peter called Jesus' attention to the fact that they had left all to be his disciples, and asked, "what then shall we have?"[4] Jesus' answer was, "And everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit eternal life."[5] However, the spirit of Peter's question needed an answer also. A mere sacrifice for the kingdom was not enough in itself; the spirit in which it was made determines the value. A small sacrifice made from a heart full of love is of more value than a great sacrifice prompted by a desire for praise, was Jesus' contention as was evidenced by his commendation of the poor widow's small offering to the temple treasury, she "cast in more than all they that are casting into the treasury".[6] "Many shall be last that are first."[7]

The central idea of the parable is the will of the master, who showed benevolence to the laborers whom no one had hired. Sinners were called to the kingdom and did not first need to work out a perfection to earn entrance. Neither does it mean that they might remain sinners.

1- Matthew 20:1-16
2- Ibid. v.1
3- Matthew 19:27-30
4- Matthew 19:27c
5- Ibid. v. 29
6- Mark 12:43b
7- Matthew 19:30a

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2- Ibid. v.1
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5- Ibid. v. 29
6- Mark 12:43b
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Everyone who partakes of the kingdom must have the disposition to enter its service whole-heartedly.[1] The attitude of Peter was mercenary, as was that of the Jews, and all others who still ask, "What shall we have?" It was tainted with the old legalistic idea of so much work, so much reward; a spirit that would result in a self-complacency. A true son could not hold grudging ideas of his brothers, and such a spirit would prove the holder of it did not dwell in love. All grudging ideas of God must be checked. It was a warning to the apostles and through them to all followers, of the danger of a lack of charity towards others and humility towards God. The first laborers received what they had bargained for, the last ones had made no contract. When one is ready to enter the service of the kingdom, the opportunity will come. Again Jesus shows the necessity of a proper attitude of the heart before one can invest his life in the kingdom and receive the plaudit, "Well done." The result of one's life cannot be wholly reckoned by its achievements, nor by the magnitude of one's opportunities, but rather by the use one makes of them, and no one needs to wait in idleness. In God's account, motive and spirit will be clearly revealed and adjustments will be made in the light of a wise Father. Service for God means the whole-hearted investing of one's time whenever one may enter the kingdom.[2]

The Talents[3] Jesus not only conceived of the members of the kingdom as God's stewards in regard to earthly possessions, but as trustees of their own personal abilities. "For it is as when a man, going into another country, called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods."[4] The parable was spoken to the Apostles and the "goods" were the spiritual gifts which they needed. However, it does not imply that there are no other "goods" by which one may serve God; as wealth, abilities,

1- Wendt, H.H. Vol. 2. Chap. VII
2- Wendt, H. H. Vol. 2. Chap. VII
3- Matthew 25:14-30
4- Matthew 25:14

learning and influence.

"Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one; to each according to his several ability."[1] The gifts were not given in equal proportion, and the one who received one was as completely equipped in comparison as the one with five, for each received "according to his ability." The one talented man could not attain as great outward results as the more generously equipped servant, but he could have attained as perfect a stewardship of that which he was capable of handling. "But he that received the one went away and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money."[2] Here Jesus used an appropriate picture of a man who failed to use his divinely imparted gifts; in marked contrast to the others who used their talents to the best of their ability for the advancement of their lord's affairs.

"Now after a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and maketh a reckoning with them."[3] The first two gave their account and were commended, "Well done, good and faithful servant";[4] both received the same praise although their trust had differed in quantity. Both had carried on their master's mission as consistently as though he had been present watching them. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things."[5] The first step in their success was faithfulness in service.[6]

Then the third servant rendered his account, "I hid thy talent in the earth; lo, thou hast thine own."[7] He had not thoughtlessly squandered it, as had the Prodigal, nor was he in debt as the unmerciful servant; he simply had neglected to use it. "I knew that thou art a hard man."[8] He had in no sense conceived of the true character of the master, but had seen

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1- Matthew 25:15
2- Ibid. v. 18
3- Ibid. v. 19
4- Ibid. v. 21a
5- Ibid. v. 21
6- Hubbard, G.H. op. cit. Chap. XIV
7- Matthew 25:25b
8- Ibid. v. 24b

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7- Matthew 25:25b
8- Ibid. v. 24b

him from an unpardonably narrow view. The master was angry and called him "slothful" and wicked." He was not judged upon the evil he had thought concerning the master, for it was the work in which the master was interested. The thing he could not tolerate was the waste of opportunity, neglecting to make the most of his ability, slothfulness; all of which proved that the fellow was selfish and in opposition to the devotion of the others.[1]

"Take therefore the talent from him."[2] He had shown he could make no use of it, and so the lord bade it be given to the one who would make the most use of it. This is a self-acting law in the Christian life; a treasure cannot be preserved as it was, if buried.

Jesus taught here that unequal endowment if equally used shall have the same value set upon it. As the father knows the ability of each son, so too, he knows which children have done their utmost for his kingdom. The faithful ones entered into "the joy of their Lord." As a son carefully administers the affairs of the Father's kingdom he becomes enabled to enter into filial communion more fully, and in such a relationship the most humble materials are glorified. Neglect is the beginning worthlessness, and no one needs excuse himself on the plea of the smallness of his gift. Jesus called unlettered fishermen while the more richly endowed failed to understand. Neglect of opportunity meant spiritual loss; "Take therefore the talent from him."[3] Faithful cooperation with the Father means increased ability to further the kingdom of heaven, "For unto everyone that hath shall be given."[4] God has distributed among men all that he values in the world, but no one is expected to produce results out of proportion to his ability. However, every son has received something to use, even though it be but one talent, and everyone has a part in the advancement of the kingdom; and each effort brings its own reward of in-

1- Bruce, A.B. op. cit. Bk. 1 Chap. VII
2- Matthew 25:28a
3- Ibid 25:28a
4- Ibid. v. 29a

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1- Arrowsmith, A.W. op. cit. Bk. I Chap. VII
2- Matthew 25:28a
3- Ibid 25:28a
4- Ibid. v. 29a

creased opportunity. "I came that they may have life and may have it more abundantly,"[1] and the abundant life of a member of the kingdom of God is in large measure dependent upon the loving sharing of that life with his fellow men.

1- Matthew 10:10b

V. SUMMARY RE-STATEMENT OF THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE PARABLES

V. SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF THE SOCIAL THEORISTS OF THE VARIETIES

"The Kingdom that I seek

Is thine, so let the way

That leads to it be Thine."

(Quoted on page 80 by William Manson in "Christ's View of the Kingdom of God.")

V. SUMMARY RE-STATEMENT OF THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE PARABLES

The social ideal constantly before Jesus' mind was summed up in the phrase "The kingdom of God," an idea which was big enough to include the present and the future. "The kingdom ideal contains the revolutionary force of Christianity,"[1] but the kingdom of God can only be understood as the nature of God is understood. The idea of God as father was not a new doctrine, but Jesus raised it to a much higher plane, and showed it to be the normal conception of the divine character. Jesus' great gift to the world was his God as he knew him, showing that it is as normal for man to seek God as it is for a child to seek his father. If a shepherd lost a sheep it is only natural that he would hunt for it, how much more would God search for a son![2] Jesus has made the character of God intelligible to us; to Jesus he was more than the father to the Jews, he was the Father and therefore father to all mankind, and consequently father to individuals.

In the parable of the Prodigal Son it was seen that God does not measure sonship by the amount done, but by the spirit of love which makes one a true son. God's idea of one who is lost is anyone who has strayed away from the highest and best. Human nature was made to aspire towards God, and only in him can man be said to "have found himself." The essence of sin is lovelessness, and the mere departure of the son was not the sin, but the fact that he was unloving towards the father. Jesus has shown us the father's love so clearly that there is no room for questionings. In his relation to God, he found a father, and this finding of God is the most important discovery of the world.[3]

The great social teaching connected with God's relation to man is found in the profound estimate he placed on the value of the individual,

1- Rauschenbusch, W.A.: Theology for the Social Gospel. p. 135
2- Lecture notes in course S.T. II-4, Teachings of Jesus
3- Lecture notes in course S.T. II-3, Teachings of Jesus

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and no teacher ever worked harder than Jesus to secure the full liberty of the personality of man, but he taught that it was impossible for one to fully express himself apart from the Father and apart from service to his brothermen.[1] Such a relationship between God and man will mean the inauguration of the kingdom of God among men.

The kingdom is the highest value, as was pointed out in the parables of The Hid Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price, and therefore the only source of true satisfaction. However, it is an ideal hard for many to grasp because it is spiritual. Nevertheless, it has as its very essence the capacity for expansion, and has as real an existence as life in a seed. Its power is often hidden but the influence of a perfected individual as he touches others will act as leaven until the mass is leavened. On the one hand the kingdom is an unfolding process of social righteousness to be worked out through individuals; on the other hand the individual is prompted to better life by the thought of bringing in the kingdom. The social order is a product of personality which can only fulfil itself in society.[2] All that Jesus had to give he gave to individuals to give to other individuals; "The communication of vitality, the contagion of personality, the transmission of character."[3]

The will of God is the highest standard of conduct for the members of the kingdom, and an understanding of the will of the loving Father means untiring cooperation, filial obedience, and deep heart searchings which bring a feeling of deep unworthiness and humility. God judges by the motive which prompts the deed, as was seen in the parables of The Two Sons and The Publican and Pharisee. In order to develop social beings Jesus laid emphasis on the importance of right thinking and feeling. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he," and as is man so is society.[4]

1- Kent,C.F.: Social Teachings of Jesus and the Prophets. Chap. XVIII
2- Peabody, F.G.: op. cit. Chap. 2
3- Ibid. page 90
4- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XVIII

The understanding one has of God's nature and his purpose for individual lives in the working out of his kingdom determines one's attitude to others. Jesus was deeply concerned with creating a brotherly attitude, as is so vividly illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan. In God's kingdom there is no place for class distinctions, and every situation which hinders the furthering of that ideal must be changed. As there should be no limit to the love between members, neither should there be a limit to forgiveness; all are brothers.

A question which arose in his followers' minds, and is uppermost in the majority of minds today, sought to find Jesus' teaching in regard to the use of wealth. He would not propound an economic system, but since the acquiring of wealth was the chief ambition of so many men, and held such an important place both to the individual and society, he made his attitude clear in the parables treated under that subject. As always, he analyzed the underlying motive and in the question of wealth he saw the insidious tendency towards covetousness, selfishness, and a concentration upon that one thing to the exclusion of higher values. Jesus was no foe of wealth, as such; but he was an untiring foe to everything that blunted man's spiritual nature as does materialism pictured in the story of the Rich Fool. Luxury, ease, position, and power which wealth brings, weakens the social consciousness as was pictured in the case of Dives.[1] Wealth is a trust to be used for the service of the kingdom, which demands the whole man; his possessions along with his mind and heart.

Jesus took the same attitude towards one's personal powers. Man is a trustee whose duty is fidelity, watchfulness, and foresight even though one possesses but a single talent. Each man should so handle this trust that he might hear his Lord say, "Well done, good and faithful

1- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XX

servant."[1] His teaching was not of economic justice and equitable distribution, but his plea for the whole of man's life in the service of the kingdom. He confronted a man; not with the problem of commercial rights, but with the problem of his own soul, the solution of which would carry with it as incidental the solving of these lesser problems.[2]

No faithful steward of God's gifts could withhold at least an opportunity for others, whatever their ability. In the parable of The Laborers in the Vineyard, both the full time and one hour laborers had worked according to their ability and opportunity. Jesus endeavored to develop industry and fidelity to one's task, but as even more important he sought to put men in right relation to the Father and their fellow men by giving them a right estimate of ability and wealth in order to free them from discontent and jealousy, and to inspire a feeling of fraternity and helpfulness. He looked to abiding personal values; not selfish competition, but fraternal cooperation.[3]

1- Matthew 25:21a
2- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. Chap. IV
3- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XX

VI. IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE PARABLES TO MODERN PROBLEMS

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one
of these my brethren, even these
least, ye did it unto me."

Matthew 25:40b.

VI. IMPLICATIONS OF THE SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF THE PARABLES TO MODERN PROBLEMS

PROBLEMS

The question arises as to what practical bearing Jesus' teaching concerning the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man as worked out in the kingdom of Heaven can have upon our modern social world. It has been pointed out that he laid emphasis on the importance of right thinking and feeling, and also taught that an abiding social reform has ethical roots; a position which modern psychologists and sociologists are taking. The great Teacher sought to check at their source malign influences which destroy the peace and welfare of society as well as the happiness and efficiency of the individual.[1] Jesus went deep to the roots of the evils that disrupt society; class and national hatreds, selfish interests, pride, and indifference to moral and spiritual values. It has been said that the world has science enough - political, sanitary, economic and ethical science - to point the way to freeing the world, but not enough social consciousness nor good will to apply fearlessly and hopefully what is known. "The most imperative need, therefore, is not so much for further instruction in the actual facts which make up these problems, as for those mighty spiritual influences which may brought to hear ...."[2]

Jesus' primary interest was not the reorganization of socity but the disclosure to the human soul of its relation to God; he spoke constantly of God as Father. "Indeed, it is not too much to say that Christianity as a system is but the unfolding of the conception of the Godward social capacities of mankind."[3] It was his relation to the Father that made it impossible for him to be lost in pursuing details; he saw around and beyond things because he saw from the point of view of his Father. His leadership in the affairs of human life comes because he is lifted up from it; "his

1- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XVII
2- Brown, C.F.: The Social Message of the Modern Pulpit. p. 32
3- Mathews, Shailer. Social Teachings of Jesus. p. 31

religious mission created his social authority."[1]

"The special weakness of modern social activity is its impulsiveness, its fickleness, its fragmentary interest, its specialized enthusaism."[2] They need the larger horizon of the view from above. "The patience and courage which administer wise relief come of God."[2] The program of scientific socialism has scarcely a word concerning change of character, and sometimes it even seems that the program stands in the way of the individual's development. Stress is constantly being laid upon more comfort, better external conditions, with the implication that better external conditions will of themselves develop an inward capacity on the part of individuals which will enable them to reach satisfaction. Jesus shows us in The Prodigal Son that man is so made that his true satisfaction can be found only in filial relationship to the Father. He is not so much concerned with the environment which may change an individual as he is interested in enabling an individual to modify environment.

His teachings on this point did not show that he would expect to communicate spiritual inspiration to people living in terrible surroundings or bowed under oppressive burdens which dwarf manhood. His primary aim was to make a man "come to himself," and in his mind anything that obstructs, or which even fails to encourage this highest expression must end. However, conditions of themselves do not make or destroy, and sometimes those which seem most favorable may wreck character and often those which seem most meagre possess the power to make men. The Pharisee was quite as much to be pitied as the Publican. If conditions are bettered and there is no higher life to enter, the labor has been futile.[3] Jesus stated the basic truths and realized that each generation must deal with its own particular solutions; a fact which explains the reason he is a Teacher for all ages and classes.

1- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. page 86
2- Ibid. page 107,108
3- Ibid. Chap. II

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1- Sabody, P.G. op. cit. page 85
2- Ibid. page 107,108
3- Ibid. Chap. 11

The fact Jesus approached his social teachings first of all from the thought of the individual and his relationship to God indicates how large a part of our social ills is due to the fact that human beings themselves are not at peace in their own hearts. Many social problems will remain questions of relief and alms unless the person can be aroused to newness of life. "Much social suffering is due to the social order; but much, and probably more, is due to human sin."[1] Jesus allowed no evasion of the truth. Men with such a broadness of horizon and internal life are the agencies on which Jesus depends to correct social ills.

The next most characteristic social principle of Jesus is the kingdom of God. He did not approach the questions of his day through external organizations or mass movements, but by the quickening of individuals whose action upon society he expected to be like leaven.[2] He thought of the ultimate rule of God, not as something temporal or material, but as established in the hearts and wills of men, a personal attitude which would shape each man's life and conduct, and therefore shape the structure of society.

Many whose view point is not from above, would say the Kingdom ideal has been a mere social dream. However, Jesus' teachings are always an outgrowth of his understanding of human nature and of his keen observation and personal experience. The question of how society could be so transformed as to be measured by this ideal was a question in the disciples' minds and one with which Jesus was interested, as is seen in a series of parables. He taught that although the beginning was as small as a mustard seed, it would go on quietly growing until it became a mighty factor. He taught also that ideals are all pervasive, and are known by their results, rather than by their process of working; "first the blade then

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2- Ibid. Chap. II.

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the ear, then the full grain in the ear."[1] That process is not external but the members of the kingdom quietly transform all with whom they come in contact, until all is leavened. Thus he expected his social principles to transform all social relations.[2]

Jesus worked tirelessly to inaugurate his Kingdom ideals, and to a large measure proved the truth of this principle. The insignificant seed planted on the northern shore of Galilee had begun to grow in his time; within a decade after his death, the tiny seed had grown to large proportions including Jews and Gentiles, ignorant heathen and learned Greeks. Men who see only by the physical eye cannot see and say, "It is there," but those who see the Kingdom, know that it is already established in the hearts of many and believe the leavening process is going on.[3] Groups of individuals, possessed with Jesus' ideal will awake to new consciences and sympathies and attempt to express his principles in legislation and industry. He who today feels humanity's needs and appreciates the seriousness of the situation, will not thoughtlessly push to one side the ideals and powers that were revealed by One whose life and words have already remade civilization to an extent that those of no other teacher have.[4]

The end is not yet attained. The Kingdom on earth must continue to grow until politics are as pure and commerce as unselfish as religion; until men make laws, carry on business and even pursue pleasures for the same reason Jesus was willing to face Calvary. It must grow until the mission of Christ to establish the Kingdom will be recognized as the mission of every Christian; Jesus saw that only by patiently giving people the truth and by showing them the mind and character of God, by revealing to them the inward, spiritual nature of religion would it be possible to establish the Kingdom of God.[5] "The kingdom is to come, answers Jesus,

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1- Mark 4:28b
2- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XXIII
3- Ibid
4- Mathews, Shailer - Social Teachings of Jesus. Chap. IX
5- Gibson, G.M.: history of New Testament Times. Chap. VI

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1- Mark 4:26b
2- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XXIII
3- Ibid
4- Mathews, Shailer - Social Teachings of Jesus. Chap. IX
5- Dibson, G.M.: History of New Testament Times. Chap. VI

not by outward force or social organization or apocalyptic dream but by the progressive sanctification of individual human souls."[1]

Jesus called attention to the fact that hearing, believing, and admiring the truth does not mean enthusiastic acceptance of it. Belief must be proved by obedient service in the affairs of the Father as was brought out in the parable of The Two Sons.

> "We would not say that down to the present time the Church has given too much thought and attention to doctrine and ritual and organization and other outward matters; nor that too much emphasis has been placed on spiritual states and mystical experiences. But this, I would say very positively, that as compared with the emphasis put on such other matters there has been a painful and harmful lack of interest in the Christian way of life. Over the whole long story of these nineteen centuries of Christianity hangs the reproach of Christ, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?'"[2]

The only hope for the final adjustment of difficulties between men, is to realize first of all that they are sons of a loving Father who yearns to have all his children know him as he is. A man's understanding of God determines his outlook on every question of life. Before one can think of righting wrongs in society, he must first revaluate himself. The final test of religion is whether it works in the personal life of the individual. A most religious man stood up and prayed, "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men."[3] Perhaps even some who are known as Christians are guilty of desiring to reform others in order to enhance their own reputation for righteousness, and yet they would address God as, "Father!" To Jesus, the value of a man's claims to righteousness was determined solely by the relation of the heart to God. The idea that external deportment is worthless before God if the motives of the heart are not righteous can only be attained through the highest conception of God. A zeal for improving others morally or religiously must first begin with one's personal adjustment to God.[4]

1- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. p.101
2- Quoted from a sermon by William P. Merrill, Nov. 12. 1927
3- Luke 18:11b 4- Wendt, H. H. op. cit. Chap. IV

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To develop what is finest in the individual man there must be not only love and obedient service to a divine Father, but a true devotion to the ideal of the social order among men which will realize the divine purpose in the world. Jesus asked his followers to make the will of God a realization in human society. Man will continue to do much the same things; procure food and shelter and carry on business and pleasure, but the impelling influences will no longer be selfish, but religious and social. He will not be actuated merely by the love of money, but the love to the supreme Source of all love and life, and loyal devotion to the highest interest of society.

However, Jesus was concerned with the establishment of an ideal society as much as in the production of ideal individuals. He does not consider men as isolated individuals, repellent through selfish, grasping attitudes, but as a unity of individuals governed by love rather than by force. His teaching is individual only in the sense in which it elevates the worth of each human life, but the real worth of each life consists in its being lost in the interests of others.[1] Most of Jesus' social principles are concerned with creating a neighborly spirit.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus tore down all the barriers that men erect about themselves. In the story, two men were not willing to use their time and personal service, but it was just the thing needed. I has been said that the chief obstacle to Christian charity, now as then, is the preoccupation of the individual with his own affairs and therefore the consequent dependence upon impersonal methods of relief.[2] In a great modern city, many types must be dealt with, but indiscriminate methods mean social disaster. Different remedies are needed; pity for some, work for others, correction for others must be offered. More and more

1- Mathew, Shailer - op. cit. Chap. IX
2- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. Chap. V

modern charity finds institutionalism an imperfect method; the levelling of the best with the worst and in all, the lessening of the spirit of self-control and initiative.[1] Again Jesus' method of individual treatment is proved effective. The elevation of the poor cannot be accomplished by the mechanical devices of legislation and organization, but as one life reaches down and lifts up another by the contagion of personality. "The last word of science for the relief of the poor is a reiteration of the teaching of Jesus."[2] The work has been attempted largely through organizations because it is easier; Jesus' ideal demands more time, thought, and care.

The particular gift which His social teaching urges is the gift of hope. Jesus' own life demonstrated his principle; his life as it touched degraded Mary Magdalene and others communicated to them courage, hope, and self-respect. When some came begging for deliverance from a temporary trouble, he gave them relief from an underlying need which they might not have recognized, or if they had, would never have dared to think of satisfying. He desires a permanent increase of opportunity and capacity. Christian charity is not exhausted by the provision of the bare necessities of existence; in fact that is merely a political and social necessity, while Christianity should be concerned with quickening the discouraged life with the stimulant of love. The Good Samaritan demonstrated the method of such relief. His was no haphazard, ostentatious giving to be seen of men, nor was it a mere emotional gift. He began with the nearest duties, but ended by being a friend. Christianity should look behind the conditions for the person who is thwarted by them.

> "The world needs more neighbors.... We can well spare multitudes of men and women who are forever asking questions, mooning over social problems, searching for the boundary lines of responsibility and duty.

1- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. Chap. V
2- Ibid. p. 254

> But the men and women who do things, kind things, neighborly things, regardless of boundaries and claims, we can never have enough of them. And this is the Christly ideal, - not "Go thou and investigate or measure or study," but "Go thou and do."[1]

The same principle of friendliness which Jesus taught could be applied to the wider relationships of nations. Someone has said that the idea of internationalism was born in the Judean hills.[2] The spirit of the parables stresses the fact that Jesus condemned the narrow, national outlook of the Jews and warned them that their pride and haughtiness was their destruction.

Even in the wider social relations, the same principle holds; that the inward attitude is the determining factor. To enable a people to develop its resources may be far different from building the world into a more fraternal organization. "Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee."[3] To bring the constructive forces of a man or nation into subjection to lofty ideals, to make that which is wrong hated, and good loved, to make normal social life dependent upon goodness, is the fundamental principle of these teachings. The cause of all inequality and lack of brotherliness is moral.[4] In Jesus' day the most rampant social evil was hate, and with true insight he saw how such an attitude paralyzes social efficiency and disrupts the world. He placed strong emphasis on forgiveness because it is a positive force in conquering evil. In Jesus' thinking there was no place for hate even towards one's enemies.[5]

One of the greatest influences towards fostering jealousy, hate, and an unforgiving attitude is wealth, the acquirement of which is the chief ambition of the majority of men. Jesus would never allow himself to be entangled in controversies, but his attitude is clearly discernible in the

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1- Hubbard, G.H.: op. cit. p. 429, 430
2- Chapel Talk - S.T. Chapel, by Mrs. Meade
3- Luke 12:20b
4- Mathews, S. op. cit. Chap. IX
5- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XVIII

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5- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XVIII

reply to the man who desired him to secure his inheritance for him[1] and in the Parable of Dives and Lazarus.[2] Then, as now, the love of purely natural possessions was one of the greatest perils that threatened men's complete development. Men were willing to sell their souls for wealth, much of which, as in the Unrighteous Steward, had been gained by deceit or graft, and even where seemingly honestly acquired as in the case of Dives, it endangered the social impulses of the possessor. "If individuals are more important than persons, then Jesus' teachings are fallacious and hostile to the highest interests of society, for he faltly condemned fortune hunting as a life purpose."[3]

Jesus suggested four reasons why a man was to be pitied whose life was dedicated to the pursuit of wealth. First as in The Poor Fool, riches are brief and uncertain. Second; the selfish search for riches means a dwarfing of the human personality, the greatest possession he has. Third, it makes men forget the value of others and destroys the sense of brotherhood; while a few prosper, many are miserable. Fourth, the pursuit of wealth is not in harmony with the love of God. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."[4] He did not condemn wealth in itself, but plead for its right use. He commended the unrighteous steward because he was able to secure higher and more abiding values with his money. The right use of wealth as a social trust has great power for character development. If a man allows the quest of wealth to master him, he is a slave, but if he uses it for the highest social development he is to be commended.[5]

It would be unreasonable to expect Jesus to have made a ruling for every situation that might arise in the ever-changing world. He did not give panaceas for economic situations, but he did seek to strive to relate all those desires and efforts to other desires which make up life. His life

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1- Luke 12:13
2- Luke 16:19-31
3- Kent, C.F. op. cit. p.232
4- Luke 16:13c
5- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. Chap. XX

does not show that he meant Christians to eschew worldly possessions, and live as beggars, but he did recognize the relativity of goods. He desired that men should choose not what is good, but what is best. His questions would not be whether a thing were good in itself, but whether it aids in the realization of a divine brotherhood. Wealth is needed in the establishment of the Kingdom, but it must be used to bind men closer together and not to drive them apart. Man must realize that he is truly a man only as he is dependent upon God and is sympathetic with his fellows. It is futile to look for modern social questions in Jesus' works; for instance, he did not mention communism, and other suggested panaceas. If such means could be proved to be the agencies best adapted to furthering a true spirit-of-brotherliness, then it would not be at variance with his thought, but Jesus' followers are committed to neither socialism or individualism. When Jesus' friends rebuked a woman for spending too much money for an impractical gift,[1] on the grounds that the money might have been given to the poor, Jesus showed them there is a duty higher than charity. In his parable of the Talents he did not condemn competition, and recognized the principle of differences. In the parable of The Laborers, he pictures the employer as having a right to do as he saw fit with his own. Jesus did not forbid labor unions, strikes, and lock-outs, neither did he advise them. He was not a friend to the laboring man or rich man as such, but a friend to the man regardless of station. His demunciation would be unsparing against those who make wealth at the expense of souls; those who are so engrossed in the pursuit of wealth that they allow Lazarus to die before their eyes without lifting a finger. Equality with Jesus was based on a common divine life.[2] "Those methods and programmes are most consistent with the Gospel which enlarge the horizon of work and which make work more personal, responsive,

1- Matthew 26:6-13
2- Matthews, Shailer, op. cit. Chap. VII

originative, human."[1]

It has been said that the modern socialist ideal and Jesus' teachings are like two parallel lines starting off from different points and running along different planes - they will never meet. The former begins with the observation of economic needs and ends in an ideal of economic change; the latter begins with the sense of spiritual need and ends in an ideal of a spiritual kingdom. Both social teachings move through the world of reality, affecting the laws of industry, but the aim of the one is to make the poor rich and the aim of the other is to make the bad good. "The social program proposes an industrial system which must depend for its perpetuation on unselfish magnanimity and simplicity of character, but it makes no adequate provision for the training of these virtues."[2]

The spirit of industrial agitation has an ideal, but is not based on faith in individual initiative and in the possibilities of the world as it now exists. Jesus' ideal transforms the world because it has faith in it. The last command of the social teaching of Jesus is "Service" or even a greater word "Love." To Jesus, success is to be found in a man's capacity and willingness to serve. The follower of Jesus' teaching should give himself with confidence to the business of his life as an opportunity for an expression of his Christian Life. He should not be confused or overwhelmed by its unrest and temptations, but should view the industrial world with hope and his fellowmen with faith because he is serving in love, and with the hope that he may deserve his Master's, "Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord."[3]

Jesus was interested less in the rights of men than in their obligations. One's opportunities and gifts may not be equal to those of another,

1- Peabody, F.G. op. cit. p. 285
2- Ibid. p. 295
3- Matthew 25:23

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2- Ibid. p. 295
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but one's gifts determine his responsibility, and in the spiritual world native ability and talents are subordinate to personal faithfulness. Honest use of one's wealth and ability for the service of mankind enables one to stand confident before man and God. Such a man attains a mastery over passing material things as well as over his own life; such a Christly character will become a dominating force that will help to bring the kingdom. Others are content to remain useless in the service of their fellowmen; an attitude which results in the decay of character and personality. The man who neglects his opportunity to be of service in the kingdom, not only wrongs the Father and brothers, but ruins himself; while the faithful use of all one's power means faithfulness, confidence, and dominion.

God gives the opportunity, talent, and privilege, but man must decide what shall be the outcome. Development can be attained in its fullest sense only through cooperation with God. There are those who say they are looking for labor, but who are really looking for its rewards rather than the opportunity to serve. Others say they are ready to labor in the Kingdom; but when an opportunity is given, are not pleased with the type of service and so complain of the work; they are not ready to grasp whatever opportunity arises as were the Laborers in the vineyard.[1] In this same story, the master takes a very unusual way of paying his servants, by giving one hour's work the same reward as a day's labor.

This employer in the beginning seemed more interested in seeing all idlers at work than in getting the best results for his own purse. Idle hands are always a burden on society, and if the social structure is to be made sound, all must have a way of procuring their livelihood although their labor may be no more valuable than one hour. The idler had no place in Jesus' plan, and it would seem that faithful, honest labor involves a spiritual

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1- Hubbard, G.H. op. cit. Chap. X

contribution which cannot be reckoned in money. Surely paying the one hour laborers was more considerate and far more self-respecting than to hand him a charitable donation. He desired to encourage industry and a fidelity to one's task and thus remove one of the chief causes of pauperism, and at the same time free the man from the wrong estimate of wealth and so deliver them from jealousy and discontent.[1]

It is said that modern socialists maintain that Jesus' teaching in the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard is a modern socialistic teaching; therefore the parable of the Talents is needed as a companion picture; "Unto everyone that hath shall be given."[2] The two statements in these parables could not but be contradictory in any realm but the spiritual, and Jesus was considering the education of the soul for the kingdom of God. On the one hand man is led to do his best because he perceives that capacity, power, and resources are his to use for God's service and when so used, ability increases. On the other hand, the man perceives that the judgments of God will be determined not by absolute achievements, but by the spirit of fidelity. "It is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee."[3]

No one of the social questions can be isolated and dealt with alone, for they are too closely interwoven, and any honest, generous work may count in unforseen and surprising ways. The only way to possess enough moral energy, hopeful love, and wise sympathy to keep one's social vision clear and discerning is by the use of Jesus' principles. "According to the teaching of Jesus, the Christian church is to be, not a deposit of opinion, but a source of spiritual energy, a mighty social dynamic, a fountain of redemptive life."[4] His teachings must be a part of the process of civilization; they must enter the solution of social questions of aggression and war, and not be kept for use until after these questions have been dealt with

1- Kent, C.F. op. cit. Chap. XX
2- Matthew 25:29a
3- Matthew 20:14b
4- Peabody, F.G. Chap. VII

otherwise. His teachings are the chief source of spiritual power, and in the solution of social questions any of the humblest of his followers may be an instrument. The direction of life to a spiritual ideal has given a member of the Kingdom magnanimity, patience, and love so that he has a right to come saying to the world of social unrest, "Peace" because he himself is a possessor of peace.

"Poor sad humanity
Through all the dust and heat
turns back with bleeding feet
By the weary round it came,
Unto the simple thought,
By the great Master taught,
And there remaineth still,
Not he that repeateth the name
But he that doeth the will."[1]

1- Longfellow, H. W. in The Golden Legend - Finale

VII. SUMMARY

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It has been the purpose of this paper to discover what social teachings are contained in the parables of Jesus and how such teachings may be applied to the problems of today. In order to establish the fact of Jesus' authority to speak on social questions a study was made of his social heritage, his training, and his personal experiences.

It was found in the second division of the study that Jesus was the product of a long line of social teachers, beginning back as far as Moses who delivered his people from industrial bondage and laid the foundation of Israel's legal code. The leading prophets of each period of Hebrew history were discovered to have been possessors of a keen social consciousness. The prophets of the eighth century before Christ emphasized the fact that Jehovah is a righteous Being who cannot overlook social sins which wreck society and thwart religion, but that Jehovah was also a loving God whose punishment was not retributive but redemptive. The people might be reinstated in divine favor by a true, heart-searching repentance to a being who was just, holy, and loving; a God described in terms of character rather than power, and who therefore insisted in his people emphasizing character.

The seventh century was not as rich in social contributions to religious thought as the former century, but they continued to maintain the high moral note struck by Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah. They caught a glimpse of Israel's relationship to other nations and saw that their nation's duty lay in making righteousness permanent. Probably the supreme contribution of this period lay in the experience of Jeremiah who realized a deeper sense of the nature of sin, as something for which each individual is responsible and which hardens the heart and erects a barrier between the individual and God. Under the prophets of this century religion became more personal and more definitely involved individual responsibility.

The sixth century's greatest contribution lay in the teachings of Deutero-Isaiah in which Israel was pictured as God's servant whose mission was to bring all people to Him. This new Israel of the Exile was to have a great missionary program, by which she was to bring all people to the feet of Jehovah largely by the means of godlike character; it was an ideal expressed in universal terms.

With the next period of prophetic history a phase of prophecy appeared which was destined to supplant true prophecy; the apocalyptic. It placed a limitation upon God's power in that it assumed His purposes were only to be fulfilled materially. In this age there arose a growing sense of legalism which continued to gain weight until the Pharisee party was the result.

At the time of Jesus, the legalistic thought prevailed among the rulers of Judaism. It made Jehovah an exacting ruler or Judge who could be satisfied only by the most punctilious observance of law. It caused a feeling of pride and self-satisfaction on the part of the rigid conformists, while the masses who could not hope to live such an exacting life grew discouraged and hopeless. Their only comfort now the anticipation of the inauguration of the kingdom of heaven; which was conceived of as either a political, external order, or a catastrophic revolution.

When Jesus entered his ministry, he accepted as the keynote of his ideal social order, the phrase, the "Kingdom of Heaven," but to him it was a spiritual ideal in decided opposition to the prevailing ideas of his countrymen.

The next particular study was concerned with the parable as a teaching device and an examination of Jesus' use of this method. It was shown that the story is one of the most powerful agencies for conveying

truth, reproof and inspiration. It was emphasized that the parables must not be interpreted as allegories, every detail of which carries a hidden meaning, but simply as illustrations used to strengthen one particular truth. In interpreting these stories, the general teachings of Jesus' entire life must be also kept in mind in order that no wrong inferences should creep in.

The analysis and classification of the parables themselves was the next concern. It was found that the social teachings could be classed under three general headings; the fatherhood of God, the nature and development of his kingdom, and the conduct of the members of that kingdom. God as a loving Father is interested in each and every child of his, and there is none so sinful, or wayward that the Father's love is no longer concerned with him. He will never be satisfied until the erring one is brought back to the family circle. It was also stressed that only in filial relationship with God can the human soul attain its highest and freest development.

Jesus' ideal society was to be worked out through the Kingdom ideal, in which God the father and man the son were working together for the Father's business. The kingdom is the most valuable possession that any man can devote his life to acquiring. This ideal social relationship between God and man is to be largely accomplished by the personal touch of the human personality upon others.

The will of God, the Father, determines the conduct of the members of the kingdom; both as it is observed in relation to God and to man. Man's attitude towards God, as he understands his nature, will be that of untiring cooperation, filial obedience, and heart-searching humility.

Jesus was deeply interested in creating a brotherly attitude of men towards their fellowmen, and a true friendliness which would create a forgiving attitude. This brotherly attitude can be practically demonstrated in a

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man's use of his wealth and his abilities for the service of his fellowmen as though he were a steward administering God's possessions.

The final consideration was in regard to the relationship between these teachings in the parables and problems of modern society. It was seen that the application of the principle of the fatherhood of God would stabilize social relations because it would enable one to view these problems from the proper perspective and so retain a hopefulness and purpose which could not be disturbed. It was apparent, however, that the high value God places upon the individual would mean the destruction of anything that hindered the true development of human personality. The individual attitude and sin is largely to blame for social wrongs, and that can be remedied as the man is brought into true relation to the father.

It was pointed out that the growth of the kingdom of God upon earth is a slow, but sure development, and that it will mean awakened consciences and a deep social consciousness.

The adoption of the kingdom ideal will show itself in true Christian charity which improves through personal friendliness rather than through institutions. It will mean the use of wealth for the best of all, and that one's opportunities and abilities will be considered as given of God to men who are his agents.

It was seen that Jesus had no worked out economic program, he did not mention many of the questions that are uppermost in men's minds as solutions today. He uttered great, enlightening truths and left them, each generation, to work out the details to fit its own particular situations.

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